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The Sins of the Fathers

The Curse of the Children

Romark

with a guest diagnosis by
Dr Bernard Levinson, MB, BCH, DPM
(President of the South African Society of
Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis).

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The characters and situations in this book are based on true occurrences but every attempt has been made to disguise them without weakening the point of the story.

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To my cousin, Dr Ray Antibe,
the only psychiatrist I have known to advise:
"Don't talk . . . Write!"

Publisher's Note

Readers of THE SINS OF THE FATHERS will already be familiar with the aims and style of the book. Romark has set out to show how incorrect parental attitudes can create unhappiness and misery in the children and in the children's children for generation after generation. He believes that more than ninety per cent of people's mental problems are created during the formative years from birth to the age of seven, when the child is most under the parents' influence.

In this book Romark continues his series of true stories, illustrating the sequences of events which can lead to mental disturbance. Parents who read this second volume will be able to avoid the traps which can ruin their children's future. Readers should be able to identify with one or more of the characters, recognising problems encountered by themselves, their families and friends. Hopefully all those who read these stories and the clinical diagnoses which follow will do so out of interest, but they will also discover something relevant to their own personal situation.

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1: You Can Say That Again

Tony Meade drove homewards, pleased that he'd been able to slip away early and avoid the peak-hour exodus from the city. He was a tall man, with heavy horn-rimmed glasses which stood out boldly on his ascetic features. He had long hair, which always looked as though he'd just run his fingers through it. Although he looked like a professor, Tony Meade was an accountant. And today he was in a particularly good mood. It was his fourth wedding anniversary. His wife, Mary, was preparing a special meal and he knew that a pleasant evening lay ahead. In a week's time it would be the third birthday of his son, Howard. His daughter, Eve, was only twelve months old.

Tony Meade enjoyed married life. He and Mary were genuinely devoted. He worked hard in a firm of accountants and was well rewarded for his efforts. They owned a fine house, beautifully furnished. Their son was an active, cheerful lad with tousled blond hair and intelligent eyes. Young Eve was an adorable little girl.

He reached home, parked the car and opened the front door. The house was swirling with tantalising odours. Mary was a magician in the kitchen. He put down his briefcase and walked into the lounge. Mary came to him at once, a pretty, eager woman.

"Hello, darling," she said, and kissed him.

"Hi," he said. "Everything all right?"

She nodded.

He said: "I managed to get away from t . . . own a bit early t . . . oday. Missed all the heavy t . . . raffic."

"Great," she said. "I thought you were early." She turned to him with sudden enthusiasm, remembering. "Howard came out with a couple of new words today.

I'm sure he'll have a fabulous vocabulary. But he keeps stumbling over a particular sound."

"Oh?" Tony was instantly concerned. "Which one?"

"He's having some trouble with his S's."

Tony mused over this. "That's not t . . . oo g . . . ood. S is a v . . . ery common sound."

He put his arm around his wife's waist and they walked into the garden. Howard was riding his tricycle, making loud motor-cycle noises and pretending to rev the engine.

"Let him have his supper first then I'll t . . . alk to him," said Tony. He went to Eve's pram and tickled her cheek as she lay looking up at him serenely.

After Howard had eaten, Mary brought him to Tony who was reading the evening paper. Tony perched his son on his knee.

"What did you do t . . . oday, Howard?" he asked.

"I rode my bike and I got a gun," the boy said, and brandished a piece of wood. As he waved the 'gun' it knocked his father's cigarettes off the side table.

"Oh, shorry, Daddy," said Howard.

"There! You see!" said Mary. "He can't say it!"

Tony frowned. "S . . . ay sorry, Howard. The word is not shorry, but sorry. Say it."

Howard looked taken aback. He stared at his father, but said nothing.

Tony's expression was drawn. He leaned forward and seized the boy by the shoulder. "Say sorry! Say it!"

Howard looked slightly alarmed. "Shorry," he said. "Shorry."

"N . . . ot sh . . . orry. The word is *sorry*! Now say it properly, Howard!"

Howard looked utterly confused. "I shaid it Daddy. I shaid shorry."

Mary lifted her hand in a gesture of concern.

Tony gave a slow sigh. Lowering his voice, he moved Howard from his knee and stood him on the carpet.

He said to his son: "You'll have to say it again, Howard, but I'll show you how."

He made the sibilant ess sound, extending his tongue

between his teeth, so the child could see how he was creating the sound. "S, not esh." Tony paused and injected authority into his voice.

"You're going to say it again and again until you g . . . et it r . . . ight."

Mother and father watched the child as he repeated the word, mouthing his S's in a caricature of enunciation until he stumbled on the right sound. "Sorry, Daddy," he said, and looked from his father to his mother to see if they approved. They did.

Tony breathed a sigh of relief. "Thank G . . . od," he said. He patted his son's head. "Just remember. S, not esh."

Howard, his eyes wide, gazed lovingly at his parents. His mother hoisted him into her arms and kissed him. "Time for bed," she said.

Once Howard was asleep, Tony and Mary settled down to a leisurely dinner. Tony opened a bottle of wine and they ate and drank well. When they reached the coffee, the wine was finished. Tony produced some old brandy and poured two tots into goblets. Tony Meade liked to do things in style.

"Just think," said Mary. "Howard will be three next week. It doesn't seem like three years, does it?"

Tony pondered. "It's so worrying, isn't it?" he said. "I'm on the look-out all the time for the tiniest sign of a stammer in Howard. But I'm convinced that if we can be alert enough to catch all his errors as they occur, we'll be able to kill the stammer before it sets in."

Mary looked at her husband affectionately. "Do you realise, darling, that you've just spoken a complicated sentence without making a single mistake?"

"I wish it would happen more o . . . ften," said Tony seriously, and adjusted his glasses with a characteristic gesture, settling them more firmly on his nose with a nudge from his middle finger.

"You always remind me of a schoolmaster who's about to reprimand his class when you do that," said Mary, smiling.

"I was thinking," he said, "that stammers are very m . . . ysterious." He was pensive for a moment, then he slammed his fist on the table. "By God! I won't l . . . et him g . . . o through l . . . ife with this h . . . andicap!"

"Don't get agitated, darling," said Mary. "We're doing our best. No one can ask more than that. If care and attention can stop his stammer, we'll do it."

Two years later, Tony Meade, his wife and children were having dinner together.

"It's a big day for you tomorrow, Howard," said Mary. "Your first day at school."

"I suppose you h . . . ave all his th . . . ings ready," said Tony.

"Of course," said Mary.

"Where's Howard going tomorrow, Mummy?" said Eve.

"To school, darling," said Mary. She turned to Tony. "Isn't she cute?"

"Why do I have to go to s . . . chool?" said Howard plaintively.

"Everybody has to go to school, Howard," said Mary. "Everybody in the whole world. You'll meet lots of other children and you'll learn all sorts of interesting things."

"Will I go to school too?" asked Eve.

"I think we'll put you in nursery school first," said her mother.

"Nursewy school?" lisped Eve. "What's that?"

"A school for little g . . . irls l . . . ike you," said her father.

"I d . . . on't want to go to school," said Howard.

"Once you're there you'll like it. Come on now, finish your dinner," said Mary.

The next morning Mary drove Howard to school and took him to meet the teachers. She felt a pang as she said goodbye to him. He looked so small and lost. Oh well, she thought, as she turned away, we all go through this moment, and remembered, briefly, her own schooldays.

It was the first day of term and the new children milled around in confusion, looking at strange new faces and

unfamiliar surroundings. Howard was hustled into a classroom with other children and was given a desk. The teacher, a tall thin young man with glasses and long hair, began to ask the children their names. Eventually it was Howard's turn.

"And you, young fellow," said the teacher, indicating Howard. "Stand up and tell us who you are."

Howard stood up.

"Come on, then, what's your name?" asked the teacher.

Howard felt quivery and nervous. "H . . . oward," he said softly.

"Oh, Howard. All right, then, Howard, what's your second name?"

"M . . . eade," said Howard.

"Right. And how old are you?"

"I'm f . . . ive," said Howard.

"Where do you live, Howard?"

"In L . . . udlow L . . . ane."

"Howard Meade, aged five, Ludlow Lane. Fine," said the teacher. "You can sit down now, Howard."

Howard collapsed into his seat, relieved.

Several years later, Howard was admitted to an advanced school where he would be able to progress at a greater rate. By now it had been established that Howard was brighter than average. He soon fitted into the less orthodox teaching methods at the new school and made good progress.

There was one class which Howard dreaded. It was taken by Mr Prewitt, a scholarly man with heavy spectacles and flowing grey hair. Mr Prewitt was a believer in decorum, dignity and discipline—the three D's, he said, which created a balanced life. Now, Howard sat apprehensively, awaiting the schoolmaster's interrogation.

"Howard Meade," said Mr Prewitt, his high-pitched voice cutting through the classroom.

Howard stood up. "Yes, sir."

"Tell us about your project."

"Yes sir," Howard picked up his papers, thinking, I'm

going to stammer on 'line' and on 'few' . . . He said: "I've made a f . . . ew l . . . ine drawings from originals which I found in a history book of my f . . . ather's. The book's out of print now, and not m . . . m . . . m . . . m . . . af . . . af . . ."

Howard abandoned the attempt to say 'many', tried 'a few', and failed. Instead, he said "only some copies exist."

"That sounds enterprising of you, Meade," said Mr Prewitt.

"I haaa . . . haaa . . ." Howard tried to force the word out.

"Come now, Howard," said Mr Prewitt, "don't keep us all in suspense!" There was good-humoured laughter from the class.

"I h . . . ave them h . . . ere," said Howard and brandished the book.

"Bring it to me, please," said Mr Prewitt. He looked at the drawings and then held the book up so that the other pupils could see.

"Excellent." Addressing the class, he said: "I want you all to pass this around and study the illustrations. Thank you, Meade."

Howard sat and relief flooded through him. The ordeal was over. He couldn't say why, but Mr Prewitt always filled him with apprehension, even though he knew nothing was wrong. He glanced toward his best friend, Adam Hall, in the next desk. Adam gave him an eloquent look.

"Now, ladies and gentlemen," said Howard, "prepare yourselves for the experience of a lifetime. You are about to be completely won over by the dulcet voice of the most fluent human being on the face of the earth." He paused. "Myself! Have you ever in your experience encountered such a flow of rhetoric?" He flung his arms in an encompassing gesture. "Not one of the thousands of you here today would suspect for a fleeting moment that in other circumstances, other places, this bewitching conversationalist cannot utter such common or garden words as mutter, flight, life or help?" He paused, theatrically. "Now would

you? No, of course not. I'm glad you all agree. Unanimously."

Howard looked at himself in the mirror and pulled a face. "The greatest public speaker in the world. But only in private." He continued his soliloquy, alone in his room.

"Tonight I shall attend Adam's eighteenth birthday party, which his father has kindly allowed him to throw in their house, while both parents are at the theatre."

"Howard Meade will meet many people . . . new, interesting and talented people, and he will show them how unique a person he is. But suddenly . . . as quick as a flash . . . Howard Meade will be brought down in size by certain words which he invariably cannot say."

Tiring of his game, Howard slumped onto his bed. The truth was that he was looking forward to the party. He's been swotting so hard lately he'd had no social life at all. Not that he ever had much, he thought sourly. He turned over on his bed and fell asleep.

At the party Howard made a determined attack on the punch bowl and after a few glasses felt elated. The drink lifted his confidence. He'd met a few friends of Adam's and they found they had a lot in common. For the past hour, Howard had been talking with more intensity . . . and fluency . . . than he was normally capable of. Now, he was telling three young men about his plans to make a climbing expedition during the next vacation.

"I've got the equipment," he said. "Everything except a p . . . ith helmet." They laughed. Howard was enjoying himself. His stammer was under control, a barely perceptible repetition of initial letters.

It was nine o'clock and the party was gathering momentum. There was a commotion at the door. Some late arrivals.

A few moments later Howard heard Adam's voice behind him. "Howard," he said softly, "I want you to meet my cousin Samantha and her father, John Franklin. He's brought her to the party but he's not staying." He turned and waved. "Over here, Mr Franklin." To Howard he said: "Samantha's a great girl. Keep an eye on her."

Howard's thoughts flashed ahead with great speed. Oh no! Not a name like Samantha Franklin. I'm going to have to say "Hello, Mr Franklin." I'm going to get stuck on the 'Franklin'. And on the 'hello'. He turned to greet the approaching couple.

Adam announced the names of the guests. Mr Franklin was a tall, commanding figure with glasses and aquiline features. His hair curled about his neck. He looked distinguished but eccentric.

Howard felt unduly nervous. He shook Mr Franklin's hand. Then he shook Samantha's. She was petite, black-haired and unusually attractive. In the confusion of the meeting between several people Howard managed to remain silent.

Then Samantha spoke. "I'm awful, I'm afraid, but when it comes to meeting people more than one at a time I get so confused I can't remember their names. I'm Samantha," she grinned. "Who are you, again?"

Over Samantha's shoulder, Howard saw Mr Franklin looking at him.

"I'm How . . . How . . . How . . ." He felt himself colour. A flush suffused his face. He was tongue-tied, caught in a spasm of inarticulateness.

Even as he desperately tried to utter his own name, Howard's glance flicked from face to face around him. Five young men, the girl, and Mr Franklin. They were all frozen, hoping as desperately as he, that he would succeed in getting the words out. He thought, Someone's going to say it for me. They always did during these moments.

One of the young men shuffled awkwardly and said: "He's Howard, Samantha. Howard Meade."

"That's right," said Howard swiftly. "That's m . . . me."

Mr Franklin moved forward. "Samantha, I'll be off now. Enjoy yourselves, everyone." He waved cheerfully and walked away. Howard felt an irrational sense of relief.

"Well, Samantha," he said, "I didn't know that Adam had a cousin."

"I haven't seen him for ages," she said. "We've been

living abroad. My father's in the medical corps. A military doctor."

The girl had an easy flow of speech and a relaxed manner.

"I suppose you've learned a few other languages, living abroad," he ventured, pleased that he'd managed to complete a sentence without a stammer.

"At one stage my French was better than my English," she said.

Howard grinned ruefully. "I h . . . ave enough trouble with English."

"A friend of my father's has a stammer too," said Samantha matter-of-factly. "He's a doctor, like Dad. He knows all sorts of complicated theories about stammers. But he hasn't been able to cure his own."

Samantha looked at him closely. "Actually, I think a mild stammer is quite attractive. It softens the masculine image."

Howard was pleased. She was a sensible girl and obviously knew about stammerers. It saved him a lot of explaining.

"In my case my sta . . . sta . . . sta . . . my speech defect is her . . . her . . . her . . ." He grinned weakly, as 'hereditary' defeated him. "It runs in the family."

"Oh yes," said Samantha brightly. "I know what you mean. It's the theory that there's a gene which is transmitted by one of the parents."

"That's right."

"Does one of your parents stammer?"

"Yes," said Howard. "My father. At first he h . . . oped he could avoid it developing in m . . . m . . . me, but here I am, s . . . s . . . stammering away."

"Don't worry," said Samantha, "nobody's perfect," and they both laughed.

A teenaged girl with a flashing smile darted between them.

"Beware Howard Meade!" she shouted at Samantha, and laughed as Howard made a grab for her.

"Come here, you l . . . ittle terror," he said.

The girl dodged his lunge and adopted a semi-formal attitude to Samantha. "Allow me to introduce myself. I'm Eve, younger sister of the notorious Howard Meade."

Howard glared at her in mock anger.

Samantha began to giggle. The young girl had such insouciance, such cheeky confidence that she created laughter.

"I didn't know you were coming," said Howard to his sister.

"Neither did I until the last minute," she replied.

Howard said: "M . . . eet Samantha F . . . ranklin."

The girls smiled their hellos.

"Samantha's just back from F . . . rance," said Howard.

"We've lived there for a few years. My father's a military doctor," said Samantha. She looked closely at Eve. "Pardon me for being so inquisitive, but are you and Howard full brother and sister?"

"We certainly are," said Eve, grinning, "but sometimes we pretend we're lovers, just to get people going."

"Come on, Evie," said Howard. "Be serious. I was just telling Samantha that it's an her . . . her . . . editary f . . . actor which causes my stammer. That's probably why she asked you."

"Yes," said Samantha. "I'm fascinated. Howard is an hereditary stammerer and yet his sister speaks fluently."

"It's one of those things," said Eve. "I escaped the family curse. But I have another affliction."

"What's that?" asked Samantha, falling for the bait.

"I'm a nymphomaniac," said Eve and laughed. She touched Howard on the arm and said: "See you later. Gerry's getting agitated in the corner."

She left, like quicksilver.

Samantha looked at Howard and he shrugged his shoulders. "Amazing, isn't it. M . . . aybe it only applies to m . . . ales in the family."

He and Samantha moved on to the dance floor.

After their first meeting, Samantha and Howard began to see more and more of each other. She was the first girl Howard had been able to feel at ease with and her calm

acceptance of his stammer made a strong impression on him. The relationship progressed, and eventually they married.

With Samantha to encourage him, Howard began to direct his undoubted acumen and abundant energies. He developed a flair for business organisation and as the years passed he assembled an impressive business, creating enterprise after enterprise. Finally, Howard organised a holding company, with fourteen directors.

It was necessary to have a central controlling body in order to control the multifarious interests he had developed. The directors, drawn from his various business interests, were to meet once a week and make decisions affecting matters of principle and policy. The first meeting was scheduled for 9 a.m. on a Monday, in the luxurious boardroom of the new headquarters of Howard Meade Associates.

Howard studied his diary for the day. Nothing exceptional. He got up as the second sweep of the wall clock moved toward the nine. Fifteen seconds later he entered the boardroom and took his place at the head of the table. Howard glanced at his pad. It contained a chart of the seating arrangement with the full names of the various directors. Some of them were comparatively unknown to him, executives brought in by take-overs and amalgamations.

He studied their names with the speed of practice—searching for stumbling blocks for his stammer. Leonard Hoover. That was bad. He would have trouble with both of those names.

Patrick Lonsdale, Frank Foster . . . more trouble.

As the directors arrived, and formalities were exchanged, Howard ran through the information about each man and his function in the interlocking structure of the business. It should be a harmonious meeting. There was no disastrous news to report. Things were going according to plan. He had one announcement which would no doubt draw some comment—an expansion programme which the more conservative element might wish to water down.

But he knew a little more than he was prepared to divulge to the other directors and he was confident of his contemplated action.

Howard called the meeting to order. Glancing from face to face, he felt a curious sense of apprehension. It was a sensation which had beset him frequently when he was younger but in recent years had virtually disappeared. It was always associated with a worsening of his stammer. He had no idea why it had returned now.

"Gentlemen," he said. "We come to the f . . . igures supplied by Consolidated H . . . omes in support of their request for increased f . . . unding."

Howard paused, irritated by the frequency of his stutter. His hesitation on various letters was considerably more prolonged than usual. He could see that his fellow directors were aware of his difficulties. He continued with his report, struggling more and more, and finally, with the consummate skill of the confirmed stammerer, condensed the final three paragraphs into a few concise words. His proposal was accepted and they moved on to the next and most important item—his proposal for expansion.

Slowly, painfully, he plodded through his prepared text. He had timed himself at home on the previous night. Crisp, precise and stripped to the essentials, the speech had taken ten minutes to read aloud to Samantha. Finally, he put down the papers and glanced at his watch. Twenty minutes. He was sweating and his hands were shaking.

There was an atmosphere of tension around the table. Hands were tapping nervously, staccato coughs were frequent. Several directors altered the position of their legs.

Howard looked at Leonard Hoover, a tall man with horn-rimmed glasses and a scholarly forehead. Hoover was one of the experts in his field.

"Mr H . . . oover," he said. "I'm sure we would appreciate your f . . . eelings."

Hoover put his hand to his spectacles and adjusted them. He spoke for five minutes, fluently expressing his view that the managing director's proposal was sound with undeniable long-term benefits. Other members of the

directorate began to participate in the discussion. One of the new members of the board, John Longman, addressed a question to Howard. Longman was an impressive-looking man, his hair fashionably long, wearing spectacles with lenses which adjusted by a chemical process to the presence of light.

As the involved question was expounded by Longman, Howard felt increasing anxiety and tension. He formulated the phrases which he knew he would have to use in replying to the question. Howard had the facts readily to hand. It was the manner in which he would have to express them that terrified him.

There was silence. Howard realised that the question had been put and he now had to answer it. He moistened his lips. "Well, M . . . ister L . . . ongman," he said, and lapsed into silence. It had taken him at least four seconds to say the word Longman. Howard's palms were moist. He was trembling so much that the papers fluttered in his hands.

In desperation, he stood. "Gentlemen, the m . . . eeting is adjourned." He turned and walked out, swiftly. His secretary looked open-mouthed. As he opened the door and turned for a final glance he saw his directorate standing in silent concern.

That night, after the children had been put to bed, Samantha brought Howard his coffee. She sat on the arm of the big chair which was his favourite 'think-place'. In it he would slouch for hours, mulling over his problems. Tonight he had been there from the moment he arrived home.

"What's wrong, darling?" she said. "And don't say 'nothing', because I can sense it."

He sighed, and sipped the coffee. "It's very simple," he said. "I'm cracking up."

Samantha laughed. "Don't be absurd! Look at you! You're a picture of health."

He took his wife's hand. "I'm serious. Today we had the board meeting—you know, the f . . . irst of the newly constituted group."

She nodded. "But you were well prepared. What went wrong?"

He said grimly: "I lost control, totally. F . . . or some reason m . . . y stammer became worse and worse until I couldn't speak."

Samantha shook her head in heart-felt commiseration. She knew the depths of frustration to which her husband was reduced by his affliction.

"That's not the worst of it," he said.

"What do you mean?"

"As you know, I had to take the train tonight, because of the car being in f . . . or repair."

"Yes."

"I was chatting to Thompson, who also commutes, and m . . . y sta . . . sta . . . sta . . . speech defect was almost non-existent. Then I reached the ticket office and I couldn't speak at all. Thompson had to order the ticket for m . . . e."

"But that's strange," said Samantha. "Suddenly? For no reason?"

"Yes."

"But you know the ticket-seller don't you?" she asked.

"Yes. But this was a new man. An elderly chap with grey hair and glasses." "It's the f . . . irst time I've ever been completely unable to speak." He shuddered. "A h . . . orrible f . . . eeling. And coming just after that débâcle at the office."

"We must do something." Samantha stood in decision. "I'll phone Daddy. Maybe he's heard of some new treatment technique." She went to the phone and placed the call which eventually brought Howard Meade to my clinic.

CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS

Howard Meade's first sentence was pessimistic.

"It runs in the f . . . amily," he told me. "Although I'd l . . . ove to be able to speak f . . . luently, I don't have much h . . . ope."

My reaction to this, I kept from Howard. But I remembered that when Freud was treating a number of hysterical female patients he was surprised to discover that they had all been sexually assaulted by their fathers. He was even more surprised, later in his treatment, to find out that all these patients had been lying—consciously or unconsciously—about that experience.

This discovery caused Freud to change his whole outlook. He could no longer accept what his patients said as truth.

In the same way, when Howard came to me for treatment for stammering, I discarded his explanations of how it began.

A favourite story is: "I used to speak perfectly but I was knocked down by a bicycle when I was a child. Afterwards, I stuttered." Or, "I fell out of my cot when I was a baby," or, "I was frightened by a dog."

It is a natural human trait that people suffering a disadvantage should find an excuse for it—a logical justification. The theory of hereditary stammering *is* such a justification.

All my research leads me to believe that *all* stammers start between the ages of three and four when a child is learning a language. Anyone learning to speak, inevitably makes mistakes. A stammer is born when parents are too stern and demanding—or over-helpful—at this delicate stage in their child's speech development.

Howard's father had a stammer, like his father before him. Therefore, knowing what anguish a stammer can cause, he was determined to prevent its occurrence in his own child. He was hypersensitive toward the young boy's first stumbling attempts to speak.

Howard made a perfectly normal mispronunciation. He said the esh sound instead of S. Worried that this might be the forerunner of a stammer, Howard's father and mother drilled him remorselessly. "You're going to say it again and again . . . until you get it right."

That phrase has marked the birth of countless stammers and stutters.

Speech is fluid, it flows. But when self-consciousness is created in a child's concept of speech a mental block is created.

Misguided but well-intentioned parental behaviour can set the pattern for a problem which will cause untold suffering to a child for life.

To understand Howard's stammer, we need to examine his parents' behaviour.

Howard was a classic example of error perpetuated from one generation to the next. Because Howard's father was almost neurotically alert for any sign of an incipient stammer, he was unable to leave the child to find his own way out of each error. He intervened, to be helpful and protective, and was more demanding of the child than a non-stammering parent would be.

I was able to persuade Howard quite swiftly that the theory of hereditary which he had accepted all his life was completely inaccurate. In order to disengage his thinking from this theory, I gave him a startling and simple proof: his own sister did not stammer.

Among every hundred people who stammer, only one is a girl. When little girls make speech mistakes their parents tend to ignore them.

Such was the case when, as a child of three, Howard's sister, Eve, pronounced her R's as W's, in the word 'Tomowwow', and also lisped over the word 'nursery', pronouncing it as 'nursewy'. If Howard had made such an error, his parents would have been most concerned and would have forced him to say the words correctly, over and over again. In Eve's case, they did not even rebuke the girl. In fact, the mother commented on how 'cute' the child's mispronunciation was. As a result, Eve quite happily fumbled her way through first encounters with difficult words and found her own way to fluent speech.

I also emphasised that if it was true that Howard's stammer was due to inherited genes, he would stammer all the time. Yet, when he was alone Howard would play games in which he would be a famous raconteur address-

ing an imaginary audience of thousands, without ever stumbling over a word.

Howard admitted that this was true. He only stammered when in the presence of others.

I also reminded him that both he and his father, after consuming a fair amount of alcohol, were capable of fairly fluent speech.

Once again, he had to admit this was so.

Alcohol is a depressant which reduces the anxiety quotient in the consumer. After having a few drinks, Howard and his father did not worry obsessively about the likelihood of stammering, therefore, they did not stammer nearly as badly as they normally would have done.

Howard's overriding recollection was of his father incessantly correcting his speech. It seemed that whenever he fumbled a word his father was there, sternly commanding him to say it correctly, thereby inducing anxiety.

When Howard first went to school his confidence in speaking had been sapped. Now he had to stand in front of the class and answer the teacher's questions. At this point in Howard's development there occurred a critical anxiety situation which was to influence his speech pattern for the next forty years.

The teacher was tall, with long hair and glasses. He reminded Howard, subconsciously, of his father.

The teacher interrogated him in a strange place, surrounded by strange children.

Howard nervously imparted the basic information about himself. His name: Howard Meade. His age: Five. His address: Ludlow Lane. He stammered on each initial letter. And for the next forty years he continued to do the same thing, stumbling over the same letters, to a lesser or greater degree, according to the factors contributing to his anxiety at the time.

When Howard attended an advanced school he encountered a teacher who reminded him of his father and induced an anxiety state which caused his stammer to worsen.

The same pattern occurred at Adam's birthday party, when Samantha arrived with her father, who had the looks—long hair, spectacles—which Howard associated with parental authority and rebukes for verbal errors. As soon as this 'father figure' appeared, Howard was rendered inarticulate. When the father figure left, he slowly regained his fluency.

A stammer is triggered by the thought: I hope I won't stammer.

When Howard spoke, he thought of his words in advance, like reading a book. He 'looked along the line' of what he was about to say. When he knew a difficult word was in the offing, he thought, I must try very, very hard to say that word without stumbling. Invariably, that would be the word he would stumble over.

Another of Howard's techniques was to switch words. He anticipated a problem with a particular word and as he mentally approached it, he would suddenly substitute another word.

For example when he became stuck on the word 'stammer'—saying "sta . . . sta . . . sta . . ." he switched to 'speech defect'.

Howard's particular syndrome was brought to a head when he held his first board meeting with the new directorate and was confronted by several 'father figures' sitting in a position to pass comment on his authority. His stammer syndrome was exacerbated.

By coincidence, the same thing happened to him on the way home that night. The relief clerk in the ticket office was a tall, bespectacled man with a scholarly mien. Unnerved by what had happened earlier that day, Howard was struck temporarily dumb.

Howard was aghast when I pointed out that he was perpetuating in his own child the stammer which had been created in *him* by *his* father. His daughter had escaped the snare, just as Howard's sister had done, and for precisely the same reason. But Howard's young son was showing the first signs of a speech problem.

Howard and I discussed various forms of 'speech

therapy' about which he had read or heard. He mentioned the system of tapping out a rhythm to which a stammerer can speak. Also the sing-along technique in which the stammerer attempts to sing out difficult phrases. I explained to Howard that these are not cures, and can sound worse than the stammer. What's more, they have the effect of keeping the stammer in the mind all the time.

I emphasised to Howard that his capacity to understand and his willingness to co-operate would very largely dictate the speed and effectiveness of the cure.

To help Howard to take the first step, I encouraged in him a devil-may-care attitude towards his ailment.

I told him: "What does it matter if you stammer next week when you've been stammering for forty years? Follow my advice and don't even try *not* to stammer. In fact, go so far as to *try to stammer.*"

I asked Howard what he would do if he were driving a car on an icy road at speed and the car went into a skid and he was heading for a brick wall. How could he avoid a collision with the wall?

"Why," he replied, "I would steer toward the wall."

"Precisely," I said. "If you steered *away* from the brick wall you would be sure to crash *into* the wall, because on an icy surface a car reacts to its controls in the opposite way. You would need a new car.

"Exactly the same principle applies to your stammer. You have to *steer into your stammer.* Then, paradoxically, you will not stammer. But, if you steer away from the stammer—in other words, try not to stammer—the stammer gets worse."

Howard proved an eager, intelligent and co-operative patient. I gave him three cardinal rules.

1. If you don't *think* of stammering, you *can't* stammer. "If I were to wave a magic wand and erase all thought of stammering from your mind, then you would find it impossible to stammer."
2. If you don't *worry* about stammering, you *can't* stammer.

"Even if you still *think* about stammering, but don't worry about it, a stammer cannot occur."

3. If you *don't try to force a word out*, it will come out clearly.

"If you are not concerned about whether the word will come out, you will find that it emerges easily and fluently."

These are the three rules. And the marvellous thing is that if you adhere to only one of them, completely, you will not stammer.

Howard being as perceptive and co-operative as he was, quickly understood and believed in these theories and made dramatic progress.

When Howard was about ninety per cent cured, however, he suffered a dramatic set-back and his speech problems returned temporarily.

He had become so excited by his progress in virtually eliminating his stammer that he decided it just needed 'one more push', as he put it, 'to get rid of it altogether'.

Of course this was the worst possible thing he could do. He had steered *against* the stammer instead of *into* it.

I persuaded him to curb his impatience and the cure proceeded effectively.

In Howard's case, the improvement has been marked and permanent. When he unexpectedly comes across a 'father figure', he can still suffer a slight impairment of his speech pattern. But now he knew how to correct it—by NOT CARING.

His son, too, speaks normally.

Another self-propagating destructive influence in a family had been nullified.

It is never too late to cure a stammer. A man well into his seventies came to me. He was retired and had decided that as he had nothing better to do he would try and rectify his speech during his last days. We achieved very good results.

When patients persevere with their treatments a very high rate of improvement is achieved. And I can virtually

guarantee a cure with people who are prepared to co-operate fully with these methods.

Some folk, of course, quite enjoy their stammers. People in this category have come to terms with their ailment—a notable example is a television personality whose engagingly mild stutter endears him to the viewers. These people are unknowingly using the most effective therapy. They have a mechanism of control over their stammer which is not available to the poor sufferer who is desperately trying *not* to stammer. They *don't care* whether they stammer or not.

2: Erris

Impulse had brought Bruce Taylor to the doorstep of the double-storey house. Now, as he sat in the taxi he had second thoughts. To hell with it, he thought, and paid the driver. He'd come this far, he might as well go through with it.

Bruce Taylor was a big man with heavy shoulders. As an engineer with an oil company, he'd been working all over the world for the past three years. Now, he was back in town for reassignment.

An uncharacteristic flash of nostalgia had prompted him to visit his ex-wife and his son. His mind churned with memories as he stood at the door. It had been a mistake to get married. He could never settle down. He'd realised he was restless after only a year of trying to make a go of it. Diana was beautiful, but too 'respectable'. He couldn't stand the routine of marriage. So, one day he decided to call it quits. He'd left home immediately and gone to the Middle East. Finally, Diana divorced him. He had scrupulously sent money every month. It kept his conscience clear, especially when his son was born, eight months after he'd left home.

Curiosity had brought him back now. He wanted to see what his son looked like.

Bruce rang the bell. The door swung open. There was Diana, her black hair drawn back severely from her classically beautiful face. Seeing her again made him want her. She had hardly changed in the three years since they had last seen each other.

"Bruce!" she exclaimed. "What a surprise!"

Cool as a cucumber, he thought.

He took her extended hand and held it, feeling awkward at the formality.

"I'm in town for a few days," he said brusquely. "Just thought I'd drop by to say hello. And have a look at the kid."

"Oh. How thoughtful," said Diana and Bruce gave her a suspicious look. He could never figure whether Diana was being ironic or straightforward. Her conversation was a two-edged sword. It cut both ways.

"Come in," she said and stood back. He went inside the big cool house, remembering it. It belonged to Diana. It had been in her family for generations. With the house, and the generous amount he sent her, she and the kid shouldn't have too many financial worries.

They went into the lounge and Diana asked whether he'd like anything to drink. Tea, perhaps? Or something stronger. It was mid-afternoon already. He might as well, he decided. He asked for a brandy and she produced a decanter, glasses and ice.

"You still drink," she said matter-of-factly and sat opposite him in the large, comfortable room.

He drank the brandy and poured another. He didn't believe in half measures. He and his ex-wife were still sizing up each other. Friendly, but wary and watchful.

"You look well," he said.

"Thank you, Bruce. So do you. Must be all that sun."

"Well, you know me," he said. "I can't abide living indoors in a bloody rabbit hutch all the time."

"No, of course not," said Diana. "Where have you been recently?"

"South Africa," he said, with a grunt of approval. "Now there's a man's country. Work hard and live hard, that's their motto." He put down his drink. "I'm only here for tonight. Have to fly off tomorrow."

Diana hesitated. She remembered meeting him for the first time and being overwhelmed by his sheer animal vitality.

"You can stay here," she said. "Saves you the bother of a hotel."

"Thanks," said Bruce. "That'll suit me fine." He stood up. "Now I'd like to see the boy. Is he here?"

"Erris?" she said. "He's out in the back, playing with his car. I'll fetch him."

Bruce poured himself another drink. He was in good humour. You never know, he thought, with a bit of luck I might even get Di into the sack tonight! He chuckled, as memories came back to him.

Diana came into the room, holding a boy by the hand. He was blond, with bright blue eyes which seemed to fill his face.

"Erris, this is your father. He's come a long way to visit you."

Erris looked up at his father silently.

"Erris?" said Bruce, registering the boy's name for the first time. "That's a pansy name, isn't it?" With a quick movement he picked up the child and held him aloft.

"It's a perfectly proper name. No more pansy than Bruce," said Diana, on the defensive.

Bruce tossed Erris in the air and caught him. The boy whimpered. He was frightened of this rough giant who threw him about like a toy.

"Say hello to your father, Erris," said Diana.

Bruce put him down and stuck out his big hand. Erris's tiny fingers disappeared into the handshake and he said: "Hello."

"Hello, *Daddy*," said Diana.

"Hello, Daddy," said the child, looking to Diana for reassurance.

She smiled, and Erris smiled too, uncertainly.

His father gave him a clap on the shoulder and Erris winced.

"You'll grow up to be a real tough one, won't you?" said Bruce chuckling, and gave him another playful pat. Erris began to cry.

"Leave him alone, you brute," said Diana. "You don't know your own strength. He's only a little boy." She took Erris on her knee and he sat there, wiping the tears from his eyes.

After a while Bruce left to fetch his luggage and Erris went back to his toys. When his mother put him to bed,

his father had not yet returned. Erris lay thinking about his father. He was frightened by him. It hurt when his father picked him up and threw him about. Finally, Erris fell asleep.

Bruce Taylor came back at 10 o'clock. He was drunk. He'd met friends and they'd been on a pub crawl. Now he wanted to take Diana to a night club.

"Don't be absurd, Bruce," said Diana.

"I'm only here for one night," pleaded Bruce. "Let's do the town, like we used to."

"I don't *want* to do the town," said Diana. "In any case I haven't a baby-sitter and I can't leave Erris."

"Why not?" said Bruce. "He's fast asleep isn't he? He won't know the bloody difference. We'll be back by one."

"Please, Bruce," said Diana. She fell back on a remembered trick from when she'd been married to him.

"Let me give you a drink, while you're here." She thought if she poured him a big brandy, with luck it might quieten him.

"Good idea," said Bruce. They went into the lounge and Diana fixed the drinks. She had one herself. She now realised it had been a stupid, sentimental mistake to invite Bruce to stay. When he was sober he was well-meaning in a heavy-handed way, but when he was drunk, he could be mean and brutal.

He drank most of the brandy in one gulp.

"Come on, Di," he said, with alcoholic emotion. "It's my only night in town, I promise I won't bother you for another three years." He laughed loudly.

"I'd love to come, Bruce," she said, humouring him. "But it's out of the question. You gave me no warning, and I'm certainly not going to leave Erris on his own."

Bruce came over and sat on the settee next to her. She could smell alcohol. He was soaked in it. Suddenly he held her in a bear hug. He kissed her, without finesse, and she was helpless. As soon as he let go, she pulled away from him.

"Come on," he said, "let's make it like old times. Pretend it's our honeymoon night."

"No thank you," said Diana and moved to the door. She knew she must stay out of reach.

Bruce lumbered after her and she retreated into the hall.

He grabbed for her, and in spite of his bulk moved with such speed that he had her pinioned before she could escape. He nuzzled her neck with his mouth and his hand touched her. She felt revulsion. He was an animal. At one time she had enjoyed him, but it was a fleeting indulgence. The only good that came from it was Erris. She tried to push him away. His hand reached under her clothing. In the struggle her dress tore open.

Diana hit him. She used all her strength and the impact of her palm made an explosive noise. A splotch of red brightened his cheek.

"You little bitch!" he said and punched her. His clenched fist caught her on the side of her neck and she went spinning against the hat-stand. It toppled over and she fell among its projecting wooden racks. She lay there, awkwardly struggling to regain her footing, her head reeling from the blow. As her eyes focused she saw, on the landing, a small white face with round blue eyes staring down at her. Erris. His mouth was contorted.

"Bruce!" she cried. "See what you've done! You've woken him up. For God's sake, stop it."

Bruce didn't hear her. He picked up the hat-stand and wielding it like a club lashed at every stick of furniture in sight. Diana dodged beneath his flailing arm but as she ran into the lounge she slipped and crashed to the floor. Bruce threw down the hat-stand and stood over her.

"You always did fancy yourself, you stuck-up bitch," he said. "But you're all the same without clothes!" He reached down, took a handful of material and with a wrench tore it from her body. He did this again, and again, until she lay naked on the floor. Diana was weeping, pleading with him to stop. She couldn't see through her tears but she knew that Erris was watching the whole sordid spectacle.

Bruce picked her up roughly and forced her to stand. He swayed in front of her, "Just remember," he said thickly. "You're no better than any other bloody woman. It's all standard equipment." He turned away and lurched to the front door. He slammed it behind him. Diana ran and bolted it. Then she fell to her knees. She heard a small voice beside her.

"Mummy," said Erris. "Why did he hit you?" He was crying, his face shocked. She put her arms around him and held him close.

"It's all right, darling," she said, fighting to control her voice. "He's gone away. He'll never come back again. Ever!"

"Promise," begged the little boy.

"I promise, darling. Oh my God, I promise you!" she said.

When Erris was six his mother gave him some money to go to the corner shop and buy sweets. On his way back, sucking a toffee, he was surounded by a group of boys. They were laughing and they jostled him.

"What's that?" asked one of the boys, pointing at the packet of sweets.

Erris held out the packet and the boy looked inside.

"Hey," he shouted to the other boys, "look at this!" He took out a sweet and brandished it, "He's got a whole packet."

The boys crowded to look.

"You can have one," said Erris.

They all shoved their hands into the packet at once and the paper tore. Sweets rolled over the pavement. Laughing, they tried to pick them up. In the excitment, Erris was knocked over and fell heavily. One of the boys punched another in the stomach, accusing him of stealing *his* sweets. The other boy tried to kick him, missed and caught Erris's knee. The children wrestled around Erris then moved off. Erris sat holding his knee, his trousers torn from the fall. Around him lay a few toffees.

He felt dizzy from the noise, the shouting and the

violence. He got up, dusted his trousers and started to pick up the sweets. He decided it wasn't worth it because they were all dirty. He straightened his clothes and walked on. The children were still playing together. Erris carefully walked to the other side of the road to avoid them.

When he arrived home he heard conversation. He recognised the voices of Aunt Mary and Aunt Sharon. Pleased, he hurried into the room. His mother was having a tea party and a half-dozen friends had already arrived. The women, smartly dressed, sat around the room, talking brightly. Erris ran into their midst and went to his Aunt Mary. She kissed him on the forehead, then looked at him with concern.

"My darling boy!" she said. "What *have* you been doing? Just look at him!" she gestured to the other women. "He's covered in dust!"

Erris's mother came over quickly, the teapot still in her hand. She put it down, took Erris upstairs and changed his clothes. Then, while she wet his hair and combed it, Erris told her what had happened. They came down the stairs, hand in hand.

"He fell in with a bunch of ragamuffins," said Diana. "They took his sweets."

"Now that's more like it," said Sharon Williams, looking at the newly cleaned Erris admiringly. "He's always such a tidy boy. When I saw him looking dirty I was shocked."

Erris came over to her and Sharon ran her fingers through his blond hair, still damp from the combing.

"Just look at those eyes, and those eyelashes!" said Sharon. "He's far too beautiful to be a boy, think what a girl could do with looks like his."

They all laughed. Diana gave Erris a piece of cake and he sat on the carpet in the middle of the ladies. They all looked pretty and they smelled nice. He thought of the horrible dirty boys he'd met in the street. It was much nicer here, where everyone was friendly.

"There is no doubt about it," said Aunt Mary. "Women are superior to men. We live longer and we have a higher

resistance to illness, so even men's physical superiority doesn't exist. I tell you, it's a woman's world."

"Men are only good for one thing," said Sharon.

"Oh yes. What is that?" asked Mary, laughing.

"Paying the rent!" said Sharon brightly.

The ladies all laughed. Erris clambered on to the chair with his mother and sat, eating cake, content in the perfumed security of feminine companionship.

Diana Taylor stood in front of the mirror, examining herself carefully. She couldn't make up her mind what to wear. The beige, the pink or the turquoise. Diana was in a spin. It was a busy day. Luncheon at the debating club, then she'd spent an hour with Erris, going over his homework and helping him prepare a reading programme in English literature. Tonight she was going to the theatre, followed by a late dinner. She was pressed for time. She stopped her nervous pirouetting and called out: "Erris, please come here for a moment, I need you!" She heard his answering call: "Coming, mother." He came into her bedroom, a striking teenager—his hair light, ashen blond, his brilliant blue eyes luminously serene and his features regular and delicate. He was so stunningly good-looking that the first sight of him was always an astonishment. He stood poised and straight.

"What is it, mother?" he asked.

"I don't know what to wear. You know how confused I become when it comes to matching colours."

"What are you choosing from?" he asked. Diana showed him. "The beige," said Erris with assurance, "and use *that* lipstick." He pointed. "It tones perfectly." He paused thoughtfully. "Don't wear any jewellery, just this." He rummaged in her jewellery box and produced an exquisite diamond clasp.

"Erris," said his mother, "I honestly don't know what I'd do without you. You make it seem so easy."

Erris smiled at his mother. "You look breathtaking, as usual," he said. "They will all want to marry you." He kissed her on the cheek and went back to his studies.

Diana followed his directions and went to the theatre, confident in her son's grooming.

Erris sat on the park bench reading. He glanced at his watch. In forty-five minutes he would meet his mother and together they would go to Sally van Doren's birthday party. Erris had now decided that he would be a clothing designer. He had discussed the question of his career with his mother and she had agreed that designing seemed to be his métier. Leafing through his book of dress designs, he looked up and saw two teenage girls. They were stealing glances at him and giggling. Erris put down his book and looked openly at them. Under his scrutiny they became confused and their giggles grew louder. Erris walked over to their bench and sat down. The girls were excited but embarrassed by his direct approach.

"I'm Erica," said the blonde, "and this is my friend Angela."

Angela said in a rush: "We bet that we wouldn't dare speak to you."

Erris was interested. "Really," he said. "What did you bet?"

"If we didn't dare, we have to buy the class tea and cake," said Angela. She pointed at the college building on the other side of the park. "Every time you come here and read we all see you."

Erris watched how the girls blushed every time he spoke to them. He thought, they can't be more than fourteeen or fifteen.

He said: "Have you really been trying to pluck up the courage to speak to me? You were here yesterday, and the day before."

"That's right," they said together. "We didn't know how to start."

Erris smiled. "Do you need courage to talk to *me*? Well, now that we know what it's about, we'll have to make sure you win your bet." He looked at the college building. "Are the class there now?"

"Yes," said Angela. "One of the girls has a pair of

binoculars." Both girls broke into fits of giggling at the thought of all their friends watching. Erris faced the building. He put his hands to his lips and with a ceremonious gesture, blew a theatrical kiss. The girls almost fainted with delight.

"Please," said Erica. "Sign this for me?" She presented an autograph book. "We don't even know who you are."

Angela gushed: "You're an actor, aren't you?"

"I'm not an actor—I'm a clothing designer, and I'll soon be very famous."

He signed the book with flourish: "From Erris Taylor, to Erica and Angela, two enchanting young ladies."

"I must go," he said and walked off nonchalantly. The girls looked after him adoringly.

Silly creatures, he thought affectionately. Girls were always staring at him, giggling, writing him notes, flashing their legs. They were so obvious. No subtlety. He couldn't take them seriously.

Erris met his mother and they went to Sally van Doren's party.

"I hope we're not going to stay too long, mother," said Erris.

"We'll leave soon," said Diana. She looked at Erris curiously. "Don't you like Sally? I think she's charming."

"Oh yes," said Erris sincerely. "She's delightful, but teenage parties are a bit much."

Diana smiled to herself. At sixteen, Erris acted like a young man in his twenties. It was probably due to his being an only child. He'd always associated with older people. It was strange, she reflected, how Erris had always avoided other children's company and preferred to mix with *her* friends. She looked at him. He was beautiful. There was no other word to describe him. Diana felt proud of his looks, his intelligence, his good manners. Erris caught his mother's glance and smiled.

Diana was pleased to see that André, Mrs van Doren's brother, was at the party. He was Diana's hairdresser and over the years they had become friends. She introduced Erris. "Meet André, the best hairdresser in the city and

probably the most wealthy. He has so many salons he's responsible for the appearance of the entire female population."

"Flatterer," said André. He glanced, smiling, at Erris. "I had no idea you had a son. You've been keeping him a secret."

"Erris likes home, and his studies keep him occupied," answered Diana.

"What's he going to be?" asked André, looking at Erris, although he spoke to Diana.

"A fashion designer," said Erris firmly. He was enjoying the older man's attention. André wore his hair long and flamboyantly. His sideburns were a distinguished grey and he had humorous eyes. His clothing was impeccable. Erris had an unusual feeling. He knew that he could trust André. He was obviously kind and intelligent.

Diana moved to other friends. Occasionally one of the young girls would speak to Erris and he would answer politely, but with vague inattention which always caused the girl to move away.

André fussed over Erris, bringing him a cold drink, questioning him about his plans for the future. It seemed that André had a friend who was in the fashion industry.

"Let me introduce you to him," said André. "You must be sure that you don't waste your time. Frank, that's my friend, will be able to direct your studies, and, who knows, perhaps he can give you an opening in his firm."

Erris found the prospect exciting and said so.

"Well, Erris," said André, smiling, "why don't we strike while the iron is hot? Frank is coming to my apartment tonight. Why not come with me, and I'll introduce you. It might be the most important meeting of your life."

André made the suggestion to Diana and she was delighted. It was arranged that André would take Erris home. When they left the party André gestured toward a big saloon car. André moved around to the passenger seat and opened the door for Erris.

"I have a lot of money," said André, in a matter-of-fact manner as he switched on the air-conditioner. "Don't ever

be disdainful of money, it has its uses, it provides comfort."

Erris sat comfortably, enjoying the feeling of opulence. He felt safe with André, secure because of the older man's unwavering attention. When the car stopped, André jumped out and opened the door for Erris.

"Thank you," said Erris, looking up at André.

"It's a pleasure," said André with a half smile. He led the way into the foyer of his apartment block. André unlocked the door of his apartment. He gave Erris a little push.

"Go on in," he said, waiting with anticipation. Erris walked through the door. He was in an entrance hall from which he could see the lounge.

"It's fantastic," said Erris. He put his hand to his mouth in astonishment.

Chuckling, André closed the door. "Go in and enjoy it," he said. "As a designer, you should appreciate it."

One entire wall of the lounge was formed by a tank of tropical fish, their brilliant colours a living kaleidoscope. There were ancient tapestries on the other walls, and in one corner a mobile which was a masterpiece of movement and form. André took Erris's arm and led him to the bar.

"Let's have a drink," he said, "to celebrate our meeting."

"I don't drink," said Erris, at a loss. He was out of his depth, alone in this magnificent apartment with a sophisticated attractive man.

"But of course, you are only sixteen . . . what an age!"

André rested his hand on Erris's. "I recommend something bland . . . A Cinzano."

"Whatever you say," said Erris. André handed him the drink. He sat on the stool next to Erris, then leaned over and pressed a button. Soft music swept into the room.

"I believe in living," said André. He waved at the room. "To me this is visual excitement," he smiled mischievously, "and I find *you* exciting."

Erris felt a tingle of anticipation. He thought: André's flirting with me!

"You're very beautiful," said André, "and you have an adorable nature."

"But you hardly know me," Erris said. He thought. What a naïve thing to say. He felt himself colour. The closeness of André, his flattering words and ceaseless attention had unsettled Erris's usual composure.

André laughed lightly. "One learns to recognise quality," he said. "Let me show you my home."

Nervously, Erris drained his drink. It was pleasant. He put down the empty glass and followed his host. André took him from room to room, explaining the design of the apartment. The master bedroom had a circular bed.

"Sit down, darling," said André.

Nervously, Erris sat on the bed. André fumbled with the headboard and to Erris's amazement he felt himself moving. He giggled. "The bed revolves," said André, delighted at Erris's response. "The secret of excitement is surprise."

André sat next to Erris and took his hand. With his free hand he stroked Erris's cheek. His touch was soft as silk. Erris sat, motionless.

"You're so lovely it's unreal," said André quietly. He leaned forward very slowly. Erris could smell his perfumed shaving-lotion. André kissed him gently on the mouth. Erris unresisting fell backward on to the bed.

Then, André moved away.

"What's wrong?" Erris asked, afraid that he had displeased André.

"Nothing, my darling," said André. "It's just that you look so innocent." His eyes filling with emotion. "You're the most beautiful thing that has happened to my life for many years." He flung himself on Erris and kissed him passionately.

Erris surrendered himself to the older man. He allowed André to take off his jacket then his shirt and his vest. Then André disrobed. They embraced again, naked to the waist, and Erris felt sexually excited. He kept his eyes closed and waited. He had no way of knowing what was expected of him. He felt André's gentle hand exploring

between his thighs. Then he experienced an ecstatic warmth. Without warning, he ejaculated. He opened his eyes.

"Did you enjoy that, darling? Did I please you?" asked André.

Erris felt drained. He nodded sleepily. "Thank you. It was lovely," he said.

André walked out of the room, calling over his shoulder: "I'm sure you could do with some refreshment..." He came back with two glasses and handed one to Erris. Erris drank it. It was pleasant and cold.

André ran his hand gently along Erris's chest and over his flat, muscled stomach.

"You're beautiful," he said. "You should use every moment of life, because life steals your youth from you while your back is turned."

André took Erris's hand and gently placed it against his penis. Erris, startled by the totally unexpected contact, drew his hand back sharply.

"Please, my darling, don't be afraid. Feel it."

André took the rest of Erris's clothes off, then his own. They were quite naked. Erris was bewildered. He had enjoyed the sensations, but now he had no conception of what was required of him. Acting on instinct, he rolled on his stomach.

André gave a chuckle. "Oh you innocent! You lovely virgin! We don't do it like that! We do it like everyone else."

He turned Erris on his back and raised his legs. Then, André made love to Erris, languorously at first, finally, with mutual passion.

Two hours later, André drove Erris home. His designer friend, Frank, had not arrived after all. Erris felt flushed by the sexual excitement. They arranged to meet the following day and Erris slipped into the house. His mother was reading by the fire. He went to her and put his hand on her shoulder.

"Hello, mother," he said.

"Oh Erris, darling, I was wondering what had become of you. Did you meet the designer?"

"No, mother. But I'm sure I will in the next few days."

"Did you have a nice time?" she asked, smiling.

"Yes," said Erris, smiling back. "A lovely time."

Upstairs, Erris took his clothes off and had a shower. He stood naked in front of the full-length mirror and examined himself. He ran his hands over his body, touching the muscles of this thighs, feeling the lines of his neck, turning so that he could study his profile. He felt very much alive. He thought back to the sex and he felt thrilled again. He said to himself: I wouldn't change places with anyone, I have everything I want.

Erris looked at the watch glistening in its case. He picked it up and held it suspended. It was so slim, a sliver of metal. He put it on. The pale platinum blended with the fine blond hairs on his wrist.

"It's beautiful, André," he said. They were in André's apartment. "You have perfect taste."

"One doesn't turn seventeen every day, and you have given me the most wonderful year of my life. How else could I repay that sort of favour?" said André softly.

"Thank you," said Erris, moved. He leaned over and kissed André on the cheek. "It's been a wonderful year for me too. You've given me a divine time and I am truly grateful."

"That first night I met you," said André, his eyes amused by the memory. "I took one look at you and I thought—Yes! Then I wasn't sure, because in a second you seemed to become so butch. Then, I looked again and you were your feminine self. You really were a most confusing child."

Erris looked at André seriously.

"Did you really have doubts about me?" he asked.

"Only for a very little while," said André hastily. "As soon as I began to talk to you I knew . . . I just *knew*."

André replenished Erris's glass and his own. He was on a subject which stimulated him.

"There are many of us," he said. "We are in a proud tradition. The ancient Greeks were a homosexual culture, that's where the qualities of Western civilisation came from. Jesus himself was a homosexual. And many great figures in public life. Did you know that Churchill was gay?"

"Churchill!" Erris looked at André with disbelief. "All those great cigars. He seemed so butch . . . at least that's the impression I've always had from everything I've read about him."

André sighed, the sound of a man surrounded by deception.

"Darling Erris," he said heavily, "you will soon realise that there is a conspiracy to perpetrate the myth of normalcy. Obviously the pillars of the British Empire would have toppled if even the word homosexuality had scandalised the name of Churchill. They must protect their illusions at all costs. But the gay world has its own freemasonry. After all, we constitute the artistic and creative élite throughout the world."

"It sounds like rationalisation to me," said Erris provocatively. "I mean, I can't imagine a so-called normal sex life." He shuddered delicately. "I'd rather not even think about it," he said, "but at the same time it seems as though the majority of the human race are addicted to their habits and we will have to live discreetly among a hostile majority."

André looked at his protegé fondly. He really was a bright young man. But even after a year together, Erris was still naïve.

André had been careful to nurture the young man's sexuality delicately. Looking back on the last twelve months he knew that he had been a little too protective. He didn't want to lose Erris, yet he knew that no one could monopolise such an exceptional beauty. Now, he decided that he would lift the shutters and let Erris see more of the homosexuals' world.

He said: "Anyway, accept that homosexuality permeates society to a much greater extent than most people realise. After all, you are not yet fully adult, are you?"

"I suppose not," said Erris. "I seem to have divided this past year between my studies and you."

"We needed to get to know each other," said André. He paused. "Now I think it's time for you to see a little more. You are a very mature seventeen, after all."

"Thank you, kind sir," said Erris, smiling, his good looks giving him confidence which belied his years.

"You've heard me talk of Miles Blandish, haven't you?"

"Of course," said Erris. "He inherited millions, didn't he?"

"That's right," said André. "I've known him for a long time. He's having a party this weekend. A very special party. The most divine people will be there. He has a ring-a-ding once a year and he invites absolutely everybody, from awful queens to the most notorious pieces of rent. I wouldn't dream of taking you if it weren't that Miles's place is completely secluded and his security is total."

"Am I invited?" asked Erris.

"I am," said André, "and that's quite enough. After all, everyone knows we've been together for a year."

"All the same, I don't like going under someone else's coat-tails," said Erris.

"Come, darling, don't be petulant, it doesn't suit you," said André. "You'll come with me next weekend and you'll enjoy yourself."

"All right," said Erris. "I only hope that the party isn't a fizzle."

"There's no possibility of that," said André with a grin. "Now listen carefully. I want you to do me a few favours at the party. Don't worry, you'll find them amusing."

André told him what he wanted him to do. Erris burst out laughing. "You must be joking!" he said.

"I'm being serious," said André, failing to suppress a smile.

After Erris had agreed to André's requests, André said: "You really are a darling, and you'll get a beautiful present for being so helpful."

Erris beamed. He loved expensive gifts. He looked at the wristwatch again. It must have cost a fortune. He felt pampered and wanted. It was a delightful sensation. "Roll on the party!" he shouted and André smiled indulgently.

Diana waved as the big car pulled away. She saw Erris's blond head as he leaned out of the window to catch a last glimpse of her.

André is so helpful, thought Diana. He's paved the way for all sorts of opportunities and now he's taking Erris to meet someone who can find him a position in a fashion house.

Erris had certainly gained from his friendship with André, she thought. He's matured into a poised, sophisticated and elegant young man.

She went into the house to join her friends.

While André parked the car in the drive of the big house, Erris looked about him eagerly. Miles met them in the hall. He was a slender young man who seemed to be in a perpetual hurry. He kissed André on the cheek and held Erris's hand. Erris gave him a languorous look, conscious of the impact of his beauty.

"I've heard of you, of course," said Miles. "André tells me you'll have a brilliant career as a designer. We must talk later. Perhaps I can find a place for you."

Erris was about to reply but André interjected.

"That's generous of you, Miles. But he really *is* a talent, you know. The gain will be yours."

"How nice to know," said Miles, smiling.

After they were shown to their rooms André took Erris around the grounds.

"It's simply divine," said Erris. "I must say he knows how to use his money."

"If the weather holds, the party will be out here," said

André. "Miles likes barbecues. He calls them primitive rites. He's quite a remarkable person."

"You sound envious," said Erris, wonderingly.

"Not at all," said André, perhaps too firmly. "Miles has exceedingly good taste in everything and his likes often coincide with mine." He flashed Erris a malicious glance. "Don't think I missed the way he looked at you! He's absolutely fascinated."

"Well, so are you," said Erris smugly. He gave a laugh. "That's what you meant about having similar taste."

"Let's get back to the house. They'll think we're having it off in the shrubbery," said André, uncharacteristically coarse.

He is really jealous, thought Erris with pleasure. Normally they kept to themselves. It was unusual to be in gay company.

André showed him around. Erris approved of everything. The furnishings were low and soft. The main lounge was carpeted in thick white pile. It was a dramatic setting for fibre-glass furniture in swirling shapes. The table tops were brilliant scarlets. The lamp shades were silk and the cigarette boxes were in gold. Opulence and comfort.

A sculptured piece intrigued Erris immensely. It was Victoriana . . . an erotic frieze. He examined its sexual intricacies with delight.

André pointed to a wall with the vicarious pride of frequent visits. "That's an original," he said.

"Beardsley," said Erris, impressed.

"There's nobody quite like him, is there?" said Miles, emerging through the doorway. "André, there is a call for you."

"Yes, I was expecting it," said André. "It's absolutely the last call I'm accepting this weekend," he added as he hurried off.

"I'm glad you appreciate my trinkets," said Miles, turning to Erris. "Come. I'll show you my favourite pieces." He led Erris along the corridor.

"In here," Miles said finally and they turned into a

room. Miles was wearing slacks and an immaculate white sweater, He slid easily into a black leather swivel chair.

Erris observed his host with a slight smile, letting him know, wordlessly, that he appreciated the visual impression. Miles held the look for a little while and a mutual attraction was established.

"That's a Miro," said Miles, gesturing. Erris studied the painting.

Then Miles showed him the work which held pride of place. A big canvas, its predominant colours being green, beige and yellow with touches of red. Erris studied it and experienced a strange sense of delusion. Figures seemed to take shape within the painting then dissolve. He tried to focus his eyes more sharply.

Miles Standish saw the movement and laughed delightedly.

"Never fails!" he said. "You obviously have not discovered him before. I love to introduce people to beautiful things."

"Who is it?" asked Erris, awed.

"Wilfredo Lam," said Miles. "Take your time. Study it carefully. You'll be amazed at what you discover."

Erris let his eyes wander across the painting. He saw a group of misty figures in embrace . . . as he looked more closely, he lost them. Then, as his gaze moved obliquely across the canvas he gasped. He'd seen a chain of sodomites. They had leaped clearly but briefly into his vision.

"He's fantastic," said Miles. "He works in the twilight world between figuration and abstract. And he's *so* sensual."

Miles's voice drew Erris's attention from the painting. He looked into Miles's eyes and saw what he was looking for . . . sexual interest.

"André tells me you have a few diversions planned."

"Oh," said Erris, a little surprised that André should have confided in his host so soon. "Yes, André wants me to be nice to some of his friends."

"Nice is not quite the word," said Miles. "When you explore sex you enter mystifying corriders." He stood.

"Come. I must take you back to André. He'll be fuming." He gently touched Erris's neck. "I hope there'll be time for us to talk again."

"I'm sure there will, Miles," replied Erris, using his host's name to establish an intimacy between them.

They found André in the lounge. "Oh, there you are," he said, concealing his impatience.

"Dinner in thirty minutes," said Miles, smilingly, and moved off.

"Where did he take you?" asked André, his voice urgent. "You were away fifteen minutes."

Erris laughed mockingly. "We made love," he said and turned away. André's fingers were like steel on his arm.

"Don't play games with me," he said, anger in his voice, and spun Erris around.

"Don't be absurd, André," said Erris. The fun had gone from the moment. "He showed me his paintings. He was a perfect gentleman."

"What paintings?" demanded André.

"The Miro and the Lam," said Erris, beginning to sulk under cross-examination.

André was obviously mollified. He put his arm around Erris. "I didn't want to lose you before the weekend has even begun, don't you realise that?"

Erris petulantly said nothing. They walked off to prepare for dinner.

The dinner was elegant. André explained that only the inner circle dined with Miles. Later arrivals would be at the party only, and most would leave before dawn.

There were only twelve at the table and at first sight Erris was so astonished he resorted to silence, standing stiffly behind his chair and nodding as he was introduced. He felt the beginnings of a blush but to his relief it subsided. He put out a hand and felt André clutch it. The conversation and laughter around the table covered his embarrassment.

"Why didn't you warn me?" Erris hissed. "I could *kill* you!"

"What do you mean, darling?" said André genuinely bewildered.

"That's Mr Tombs," Erris said, as if in full explanation.

"I know that!" said André.

"But he's mother's bank manager," said Erris despairingly.

"He's mine, too, but he's completely discreet. After all, he's one of us."

"I don't believe it," said Erris, stealing a quick glance at the man with the rimless spectacles and bald head. Erris had been with his mother when she had visited her bank and he associated this man only with matters of seriousness.

André chuckled and whispered in Erris's ear. The effect was instantaneous. Erris laughed. "So he's one of *your* friends?" he said, his composure restored.

"Remember our conversation?" said André. "About unlikely people? Just look around this table."

Erris made a covert assessment of the others. Four places away sat Jonathan Coverly, the comedian, Erris could hear his hectoring voice above everyone else's.

"Him too?" said Erris.

André nodded, enjoying Erris's surprise.

"What's more," said André, "he's *another* of my *friends*." He paused, mischievously. "Try and guess the third."

Seated next to Miles was Frank, the friend of André's from the fashion world. He waved gaily as he caught Erris's eye. But as he returned the gesture Erris became fascinated by the man next to Frank.

He nudged André again. "That's Albert Leroux, isn't it?"

"So it is," said André, bubbling with enjoyment. "The heavyweight boxer."

Theatrically, Erris let his napkin fall.

"That's the last straw," he said, staring at André in amazement. "You know what I think," he said, and paused for effect "... I think this whole party is a charade, arranged by you just to take a rise out of me."

"Don't let your imagination get the better of you. Nobody could contrive an occasion like this," said André. This is the *real* world. Here we are safe and can be ourselves. Every person at this table is gay."

He stretched out, in full view, and took Erris's long-fingered, carefully manicured hand in his own. "We have nothing to hide," he said, and leaned across and kissed Erris on the cheek.

"You still haven't told me who your other friend is," said Erris.

"Can't you guess?" teased André playfully.

Erris glanced about the table once more. Perhaps the majority of those present were perceptibly effeminate in their gestures and speech. But the others could have been taken from the mainstream of daily life. They seemed to be 'straight' people.

"I wouldn't know where to begin," he said. "But I'll make the most ridiculous guess. The boxer," he said.

"You're right," said André, and burst out laughing at Erris's expression.

The conversation scintillated, and the food was subtle and delicious. Wine flowed, and soon everyone was a little heady. Miles Blandish looked about him approvingly. Up to now, everything was a success. Soon the casual guests would arrive . . .

After dinner they moved into the lounge and began to mingle with the other guests who were arriving.

Erris and André ensconced themselves on a couch, drinks in hand and watched the passing parade. Erris would signify his curiosity about a guest, and André would provide the information.

A tall, muscular youth in a leather jacket, his face coarse and scarred, entered and looked about him. An elderly man scuttled across to greet him.

Erris lifted his eyebrows enquiringly.

André pulled a disapproving face.

"The cheapest rent in town," he said. "He can't be

trusted. The sort of creature who'd steal your wristwatch if he had a chance. Some unfortunates need the brutality of that sort of person."

A flamboyant twosome appeared in drag. They were chattering and smiling and obviously basking in the attention they received.

"They're a cabaret act called 'The Bosom Friends'," said André.

They came within earshot. Their wigs were extravagant, their clothes impeccable. Glitter, gloss and feminine frippery.

"We absolutely *died*," said one. "I threatened the manager that if he didn't control the door and keep those scum out, we'd come back as men!"

The little group shrieked with amusement.

"And appear in suits!" exclaimed his partner. Another crescendo of laughter.

There was a sudden swirl of movement around a huge man. He was at least six-foot-six tall and built proportionately.

"I don't know what his real name is but everyone calls him Bonzo," said André. "Straight, actually, not gay at all. A lot of the 'girls' like him for his muscles and he's very sympathetic, so Miles usually invites him, arranges his transport and gives him money." He pointed quickly, "See what I mean?"

Bonzo had taken off his shirt and there was a crush of people around him. His huge right arm rose above the throng, with someone in drag seated delicately on his gigantic biceps. People applauded, pressed closer and felt his tensed muscles.

"Imagine having *that* on top of you," said one of the The Bosom Friends.

"Well, darling, at least it would be a *new* experience," said his partner. They moved off, their followers in close pursuit.

André and Erris watched the spontaneous show for a time, then André took Erris's hand.

"Come," he said. "It's time to prepare."

"Really, André," said Erris, "I feel ridiculous."

Erris was dressed as a maid, he carried a duster.

"You look absolutely divine," said André firmly. "Now, whatever you do, don't laugh, don't even smile. You must keep a stern expression all the time. Don't speak, just do as I told you." André gave Erris an affectionate pat. "Now go in. He's waiting."

Erris composed himself and sauntered through the door which André held open for him. He felt a sense of excitement. After all, the man was famous.

He locked the door behind him, as he had been told. Jonathan Coverly, the comedian whose masculinity was a national byword, sat naked in a chair. He looked up as Erris entered.

Erris walked around the room several times, then finally halted directly in front of the comedian. The man rose to his feet, unsteadily.

He's been drinking, thought Erris, struggling to keep his features impassive. Coverly, his face distorted, lay face-down on the sofa.

With Coverly unable to see his face, Erris found it impossible not to smile. He raised the duster and gave Coverly three resounding blows across the buttocks with the wooden shaft.

The older man lay panting. The blows had left three bright weals. He rolled over slowly and stood. His eyes were glazed as though he did not see Erris. He walked to a cupboard and took out a plastic raincoat. He came behind Erris and held the raincoat so that Erris could slip his arms into it. It was transparent and flimsy. Erris smoothed it, clipped it and stood silently as he had been instructed.

Coverly stood in front of him, his face blotchy. He raised both hands in front of him, grabbed the raincoat and ripped it from Erris's body. As the plastic tore, Coverly ejaculated and fell backwards on to the sofa. He lay there, covering his face with his hands.

Erris looked at the pathetic figure in his middle-aged nudity. He thought: I'll never be able to laugh at him again.

"I know it was an ordeal," said André, as he helped Erris to change. "But I hope it was a philosophical experience as well. It proves that things are not always what they seem."

"You can say that again," said Erris with feeling. He felt odd, now that it was over. It had been unpleasant, yet he had enjoyed it. Particularly when he had caned Coverly with the duster.

"What's next?" he asked.

"We have an hour to ourselves," said André. "It's one o'clock." he laughed, lightly. "The next performance by Erris is scheduled for 2 a.m."

"Who's the audience?" enquired Erris.

"Mr Boxer," said André

"Why does it all have to be so precise?" said Erris peevishly. He was beginning to feel tired, he had been sitting for thirty minutes while André prepared him for his next role.

"Because we are creating an illusion and we don't want to skimp, do we?" said André.

He adjusted the male wig on Erris. It was predominantly grey, appropriate to a man in his fifties. André had darkened Erris's eyes with make-up and he was greying his eyebrows. The effect was bizarre . . . the face of a child, prematurely old.

"Why do I have to wear a suit?" asked Erris, still petulant.

"Now, darling, don't be tiresome. I don't write these charades, do I? This is how the poor creature wants it. Don't be selfish. Think of his pleasure too."

At last André was satisfied. He studied Erris's new face. Then he produced an old-fashioned pair of spectacles and gave them to Erris to put on.

When Erris saw his reflection he gasped.

"Hideous!" he cried, and turned away, as though he had been given a glimpse into his own future.

"It's not hideous!" protested André. "It's you, made up to be old, that's all. How could you possibly be hideous?"

Mollified, Erris smiled. "It came as a shock, seeing myself like that."

"Put this on," said André, and gave him a severe black suit.

Now, Erris looked even more startling.

"I think he's ready," said André. He went out of the room and returned in a few moments.

"Yes," he said as he squeezed Erris's arm. "Now remember the script."

Erris felt elated that another charade was about to take place. He prepared himself for a moment, picked up a cane, flung open the door and walked into the other room.

The room was furnished with the stylishness which characterised the house except for a folding camp bed, occupied by the heavyweight champion boxer.

He was dressed in a rubber mackintosh and he looked up expectantly as Erris entered. Erris saw the scar tissue around the eyes, the nose bent by blows, the pugnacity of the face, so familiar from the television screen. The bulk of the man, the heavily muscled shoulders almost bursting from the restraining mackintosh, intimidated Erris. But he remembered his coaching. He stood with the cane in his right hand and rapped it sharply into the palm of his left.

"You've been a very naughty boy! Very naughty indeed! Now I'm going to punish you!" Erris paused. "Turn over!" he commanded.

The huge figure moved clumsily on the camp bed until he was lying on his stomach. With uncertain gestures, he rolled up the mackintosh so that his buttocks were bared. They were hard and muscular, like the rest of his body.

Erris raised the cane and brought it down hard. He beat the boxer repeatedly, until his shoulder muscles ached. There were trickles of blood where the cane broke the skin. The man did not utter a sound during the thrashing.

Erris stepped back breathing heavily. He threw the cane to one side.

Slowly the heavyweight champion rose. As he moved into the adjoining bathroom his mackintosh flapped, inadequate to cover his enormous naked body. The boxer climbed into the bath and stretched on his back.

Erris unzipped himself and sprayed his urine all over the man. Splashing against the rubber and the sides of the bath until his bladder was empty. The boxer whimpered. He put his hands over his head childishly. Erris could not tell whether in delight or anguish.

Erris washed his hands and rejoined André. He took off the wig and threw it on the table.

"How was it?" asked André.

"All right," said Erris casually. Then he paused, serious. "I enjoyed caning him. But the other part did nothing for me. I wonder what *he* gets out of it?"

"The psychiatrists say its reversion to childhood," said André, "but don't ask *me* to explain it."

"Is that *all* he does?" asked Erris.

"Yes, he's a neuter. But when you think of it, he's really happy in his work. He enjoys being beaten up. But he also enjoys hurting other people."

André came over to Erris. "Let me take your make-up off. Now we can be ourselves. The play-acting is over."

"I thought there was one more performance," said Erris, in puzzlement.

"There is," said André, smiling. "But you won't have to act!"

Thirty minutes later, Erris and André were drinking together in their bedroom. Everything was as they had left it earlier, except that an armchair had been placed close to the bed.

"Tell me what's going on," said Erris. He was a little drunk. André had been feeding him stronger rum punches, carefully bringing him to a reckless mood.

"There's nothing mysterious," said André

"Well, I want to know," pleaded Erris. "You said I did very well tonight. It's not fair that you should keep things from me."

"You were absolutely magnificent," said André. He reached across and took Erris's hand. "We are going to make love."

"Oh," said Erris. "But what's so unusual about that?"

"There will be a spectator," said André simply, watching Erris closely for signs of reluctance. He was not sure whether he was granting Erris sexual emancipation too swiftly.

But Erris smiled, slowly.

"Oh?" he said. "Do it in front of someone else? The idea quite appeals. I must be an exhibitionist."

"I'm delighted," said André. "After all, I do owe this man a favour."

André took Erris to the bed and kissed him passionately. The bank manager came in and settled himself in the armchair facing the bed.

Erris caught the banker's eye and he gave him a half-smile of recognition. Then Erris and André went through their sexual performance while the banker watched silently.

The next day Erris and André spent with the other guests. Erris was sought by many, who entreated him to phone them or come to dinner or the theatre.

André watched the inevitable. He realised that he was losing his lover. The thought was painful, but he knew it was time for a change. There were no surprises in long-term relationships. Also, Miles had introduced him to a young fellow who might prove quite stimulating.

Molly Bee, the fashion columnist, tried to pinpoint Erris Taylor in the mêlée of the cocktail party. Being five-foot-three had its handicaps, she reflected. She appealed to Russell Pinter, one of the news reporters, who was partnering her for the evening.

"Can you see him anywhere, Russell?" she asked.

"Over there," he said, and taking Molly's hand he pushed his way through the crowd.

It was a preview party for Erris Taylor's new collection. The clothes had been a stunning success, now everyone was fiercely eager to talk to Erris. She had already

arranged an interview but getting one was proving to be another matter.

Russell expertly bulldozed a path and they came to the knot of people surrounding Erris. Molly waited for an appropriate moment then grabbed him by the arm.

"Erris, darling, you are gifted. I have only one word for your creations—exquisite."

"I thought the word you would choose would be—expensive," said Erris, looking perfunctorily at her, then focusing on Russell.

He gave Russell a beaming smile. He saw the answering humour in Russell's eye and instantly felt a delicious tremor of excitement. Was this gorgeous man available...?

Erris, at twenty-five, was no longer the 'pretty little boy' in his homosexual life. Now, he was the flirtatious predator. He enjoyed playing cat and mouse with so-called 'straights'. So many unlikely and unexpected prizes had dropped into his hands.

"Who is this divine creature, darling?" he asked, cutting across Molly's questions.

"Oh," said Molly, who had mistakenly believed that Erris was listening to her. "This is Russell Pinter. He covers industrial and financial affairs."

"How enchantingly different," said Erris. "I had no idea there were 'industrial' reporters. It sounds so portentous for one so young." Molly was irritated by Erris's obvious vamping of her partner. "He's an ancient twenty-two-year-old, straight out of journalism school and quite normal, so leave him alone and concentrate on me." She grabbed Erris by the arm and guided him into a corner.

Russell Pinter looked at the restless, shifting crowd of buyers, models and journalists. Although Erris had embarrassed him with his archness, Pinter felt no anger. Taylor was so feminine.

At the end of the party, Erris invited Molly and Russell to dinner. Molly, under no illusions about Erris's motivations, accepted with alacrity. To dine with Erris Taylor on the night of his triumph was a scoop in itself.

The dinner was pleasant, intimate, relaxed. Erris played down his approach toward Russell and kept it distinctly low-key, although Pinter occasionally became aware of the quiet speculation with which the designer regarded him. Pinter reacted to the homosexual blandishments with humour and by the end of the evening they had established a genuine rapport.

"You're very sympathetic, Russell," said Erris as they left. "I hope we'll be friends." They shook hands, arranged to meet again and Russell took Molly home.

"You wouldn't believe the change in him in the past year," said Molly in the car.

"In what way?" asked Russell.

"Well, he's been a success as a designer since he was twenty-two. I must admit that he didn't let it spoil him."

"But in the past year he's changed. He used to be diffident and refined. Now, he does what he likes. Look at the way he tried to pick you up! He would have died rather than be so brazen a few years ago."

"I don't mind him," said Russell, "He's a female, as far as I'm concerned . . . although an inferior one." He smiled at Molly. "I prefer the real thing."

As the years passed, Erris Taylor established himself in the world of fashion. His success brought financial security. He wanted to buy his mother a bigger house. She refused. She was happy where she was, with her circle of friends. Erris lived in a luxury apartment but he was a regular visitor to his mother, staging surprise parties and showering her with presents. To Diana Taylor, Erris was the ideal son, attentive, thoughtful and considerate.

When she occasionally questioned him about marriage, he brushed the queries aside.

"I'm married to designing, mother. I have no time for anything else." And he would change the subject.

Russell Pinter made his name in journalism and his continuing friendship with Erris proved mutually beneficial. It provided Pinter with pipelines to information and influence. And Erris had a 'front' whenever he wished to

pretend normality. He, Russell and female partners were regularly seen at public events. Privately, Erris enjoyed an uninterrupted flow of male lovers.

Once a month Pinter and Eris would meet for lunch. It was a time for exchanging information and it provided the tenuous link which kept their unlikely friendship alive.

Russell had arrived at the restaurant first and seated at their customary table, he watched Erris's arrival. Erris swept in. He acknowledged greetings with outstretched arms and was theatrically astonished to see any acquaintances he had not met for some time. As he neared the table, Russell realised that Erris was wearing make-up. It was the first time he had ever noticed it in public, although sometimes in the privacy of Erris's apartment he had detected subtle touches of eye-shadow and lipstick.

Erris moderated his extravagant manner as he greeted Russell. They ordered, then the customary flow of Erris's conversation began. It was an unbroken torrent of gossip, outrageous sallies and generalisations. They discussed the forthcoming Mayoral election.

"Now take Clark," said Erris. "He's nothing but a queen, dearie, and that's what makes me so enraged by his image of sexual orthodoxy. D'you know he had the audacity to condemn homosexuality as, what were his words, oh yes . . . an affront to public conscience? Meanwhile he probably spends all his time in public conveniences, affronting pieces of rent!" Erris spat words, like a cobra despatching venom.

Russell said nothing. He did not mention that he had lunched with Clark two days previously and had found him perfectly normal.

He reflected that in the past months Erris had become more and more prone to wild accusations. To him, every public figure was queer.

"D'you know him personally, Erris?" he asked mildly.

"No, I haven't met him. But I have friends who have," said Erris.

He picked up the à-la-carte menu. Russell noticed that he had to squint to make out the small print, which threw

his make-up into relief. Russell saw the first encroaches of age upon Erris's softly beautiful face. It gave him a jolt. One could not think of Erris as old, or even middle-aged.

"It's my birthday next week, Erris," said Russell, "I hope you'll come to dinner. Just a few friends."

Erris looked at him searchingly. "I don't mean to be bitchy, dearie, but it isn't done to draw attention to one's birthday." He laughed. "Not in my circles, anyway."

"One can't fight time," said Russell blandly. "I just hope I'll be able to adjust to life as I get older."

Erris was silent, lost in thought. His face fell into bitter lines. He looked up and caught Russell's concerned eye.

"All right," he said softly, "I'm getting old. And I hate it. You wouldn't believe the number of people I've loved, who won't spare me a glance. Anyone over twenty-five is ancient and once you're thirty, you've got one foot in the grave."

Erris sniffed contemptuously and helped himself to more vegetables.

"Their values are so superficial."

Russell smiled tolerantly at his friend's hypocrisy. Erris still vamped every good-looking young man he met. Age had certainly not dampened him sexually. On the contrary, advancing years seemed to spur him to be more outrageous. Now, he was reduced to wearing make-up. Russell felt a surge of pity. Youth was God to the homosexual, he thought. What a transient deity.

Many years later Russell Pinter had become a magazine editor. He and Erris had drifted socially. They encountered each other occasionally, but only when they happened to attend the same obligatory gathering.

Russell's magazine was toying with the idea of bringing out a fashion supplement to mark the twenty-fifth year of the 'house' of Erris Taylor.

As an old friend, Russell felt it devolved on him to broach the subject with Erris. Whether the supplement became reality would depend largely on Erris's co-operation. In recent years Erris had developed a reputation for

cranky eccentricity. He harboured grievances and waged vendettas savagely. But Erris had been extremely polite when Russell phoned and had readily agreed to meet him for lunch.

As he sat waiting, Russell reflected that in one respect Erris hadn't changed. He was always late for an appointment. When Erris eventually arrived, Russell stood and Erris swept to him, arms outstretched.

"My dear Russell," he said, and took Russell's proferred hand in both of his. "It's been an absolute aeon since we last met. I feel positively sinful for having neglected you . . ."

Russell tried to control his instinctive reactions on seeing Erris for the first time in nearly fifteen years. He was horrified. Erris's face was a mask. The female make-up was blatant. Russell could see the tiny incisions from at least one face-lift. As Erris turned to order from the barman, Russell saw that the make-up ended along the line of the jugular vein. It was a monstrous oversight, emphasising the made-up mask. Veins of age stood out on Erris's neck, a mockery of the dyed hair, plucked eyebrows and diligent application of rouge and mascara.

But Erris was charm personified. He lifted his glass and toasted their meeting. They soon disposed of the business they had to discuss. Erris promised co-operation and it was agreed that the supplement would appear very shortly. Over liqueurs, Erris became more expansive. Alcohol made his gestures even more extravagant, his mannerisms were archetypically high-camp.

Then to Russell's astonishment, Erris dropped his façade. He spoke with soft intensity and sincerity. Looking intently at Russell, he said: "You probably have no idea how important our luncheons were to me. I was bitterly disappointed when we drifted apart."

"It was my job," said Russell, eager to reassure Erris. "I was abroad so frequently it became impossible to see anyone regularly."

"I know, I know," said Erris. He shook his head, pensively. "I'm an old queen now. I can afford honesty, at

last. Being a homosexual is very lonely. It meant a lot to have a friend like you, someone leading a normal life that I was able to relate to."

He drank his liqueur, and ordered another, then lifted a hand to Russell. "I know, I'm drinking too much. But this is an occasion and I'm celebrating."

He looked directly at Russell. His blue eyes, once part of his beauty, were dimmed and rheumy.

"I don't suppose you could understand the relief it was to have a friendship without a trace of sexuality. Oh, at first I rather fancied you, but I soon realised that you were not 'that way'. Then I began to enjoy our friendship for its own sake."

Russell, embarrassed by this effusion, said: "There's no reason why we shouldn't continue, is there? After all, I'm settled now and so are you."

"Yes, so we are," said Erris.

"Tell me something," he said, "In all the times we've met, you've never questioned me about my 'gay' life. Why was that . . . courtesy, or lack of interest?"

"It was none of my business. If you wanted to talk, I would have been willing to listen," said Russell. He smiled. "But of course I was curious. One always is, about things one doesn't understand."

"I suppose we're a third sex," said Erris. He moved back in his seat. His lean figure had vanished in the limbo of the years, his plump body sat heavily in the chair.

"I remember when I was a babe in arms," he said. "I was in my cot. My mother had a man with her. He picked me up and cradled me. I could smell his male aroma. I knew then that I was a woman inhabiting a male body."

Russell looked sharply at his slightly drunk friend. This preposterous story had all the hallmarks of contrived rationalisation. He became irritated with this self-indulgent conversation and pleading an appointment, he left. Erris was still drinking.

That evening Russell was at home, reading, when the phone rang. It was a friend who was a police reporter.

"Erris Taylor is in trouble," said the reporter. "He asked me to let you know."

"What sort of trouble?"

"He picked up a youngster in a public lavatory. Unfortunately, it was a cop."

"Oh my God," said Russell. "Can you kill it?"

"Not a chance," said the reporter. "Everyone's on to it. It'll be front page in a couple of hours. Bye." He hung up.

Russell sat in court. Erris had spent the night in jail, in spite of Russell's efforts to free him. Now, as he stood in the dock, he looked pathetic. His hair was awry, his make-up streaked and his greying beard visible. He was old and haggard.

"Do you wish to say anything?" asked the magistrate.

"Yes please," said Erris. His voice faltered and he cleared his throat. "I really don't know what got into me, your worship, unless it was too much champagne."

There was a subdued murmur of amusement in the courtroom. The magistrate peered over his spectacles then returned his attention to Erris.

"I'm not usually so indiscreet. But yesterday I was celebrating something, and I had more to drink than is my custom. I can assure the court that there will not be a repetition of this." Erris dropped his head briefly, then faced the magistrate again. "I am deeply ashamed."

The magistrate wrote intently, his face obscured from view. He looked up and moved his papers to one side.

"Mr Taylor, you are an extremely well-known man. One might say that you are a public figure. That a man in your position should have been reduced to soliciting in the environs of a public toilet is shocking." He paused and studied Erris closely, adjusting his spectacles with one hand. "You have no previous convictions and I am persuaded that you acted in an uncharacteristically aberrant moment. Therefore, I propose a suspended sentence."

Erris relaxed visibly in the dock.

"There is one condition, however," said the magistrate. "You are to seek treatment, and the court must be

kept informed of your progress. According to my information, homosexuality is a deviant condition which can be cured. You are therefore discharged, and sentence is suspended for one year, conditional on your obtaining psychological treatment to the satisfaction of the court."

He banged his gavel and the clerk of the court adjourned the proceedings.

Russell walked to the dock and helped Erris down. The designer looked pale and exhausted. Russell took him to his car and they drove to Erris's apartment. After he had bathed and changed, he re-emerged, somewhat restored, but the humiliation had scarred him.

"What am I going to do?" he asked.

CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS

Erris Taylor's homosexuality was spawned in his childhood, nurtured in the bosom of his mother's attention, and brought to fruition by his seduction in early teens.

Erris's father was a violent, selfish man who functioned on a physical rather than an emotional level. He was an absentee parent, having abandoned his family before his son was born. He entered Erris's life only once . . . an occasion on which he frightened the young boy, then exposed him (during his vulnerable formative years) to physical violence and hostility directed against his mother. It was a traumatic experience and not unnaturally Erris reacted against the ugliness of his father's overt masculinity.

He was drawn toward the gentleness and harmony of his mother's world, which was excessively feminine, characterised by the all-female tea parties. So strongly was he channelled towards feminine values that an encounter with boys in the street was upsetting to him. Although Erris's mother was not specifically at fault in her behaviour, she drew her only child, a boy, into her feminine world.

Erris had an instinctive sense of colour and line. It was

easy to apply this flair to feminine things, and his mother began to rely on him more and more in her choice of clothing.

Erris was exceptionally good-looking. Girls pampered him and sought his attention. When two girls approached him in the park, Erris found their attention flattering but because of his overwhelmingly female orientation he could not take the girls seriously. Subconsciously he regarded himself as one of them and was in competition with them.

Had anyone suggested to Diana Taylor that her son was homosexual she would have been outraged. She was an excellent mother, kind, thoughtful and responsible. But the essential male-female balance of the household had been disrupted. It was inevitable that Erris should suffer a disorientation because of this.

The next step in Erris's development as a homosexual was his meeting with André. André had the experience and the finesse to be able to relate to a sensitive young boy and mould him as he wished. Erris, deprived of a real father, sought a substitute. Because of his feminine orientation he was like a teenage girl seeking the security of a relationship with an older man. André was the age to assume the role of paternal benefactor and source of love and affection. In his naïveté, Erris accepted André's standards as normal.

As a beautiful youth initiated into homosexuality, Erris was content. He had no remorse . . . to him, the sexual behaviour of 'normal people' was revolting.

Women were equated with his mother. To make love to his 'mother' would be incestuous.

André treated Erris as a normal man would treat a girl. He fussed, flattered him and gave him presents. Erris enjoyed every moment.

André fed Erris with absurd homosexual self-justification, alleging that great figures of history, such as Churchill were 'queer' and sexually deviant. The implicit ostracism of society, even in permissive times, makes it necessary for homosexuals to justify their actions to themselves.

When André introduced Erris to the perversions of

homosexual society, Erris found it an easy step to take. Because of his exceptional appearance and because of his patron, Erris was introduced to homosexuality with the trappings of luxury. His pathway to despair was carpeted in opulence.

The weekend homosexual orgy opened his eyes to the range of people who fall within the ambit of homosexuality. The three with whom Erris enacted sexual charades were classic examples of perversion. The comedian who was caned, then achieved sexual release by ripping a plastic raincoat from Erris, was a case-book example of a child who had been deprived of love and affection. When such a child, at an early age, is given a balloon as a treat, he sensually enjoys the feel of it, and the colour. When the balloon bursts, the child is frustrated. He has 'lost again'. Inexplicably something he loves has vanished, leaving only torn shreds of plastic. He may spend his lifetime trying subconsciously to relive that experience.

It is a misconception that sexual awareness comes to the fore on adolescence. Children are sexually aware from birth. The comedian had been thrashed by his father when he was small and because of the absence of love he equated attention (a thrashing) with affection. He developed into a masochist, one who enjoys having pain inflicted.

The comedian had an affectionate memory of his infancy . . . of a pretty maid who looked after him. By the time the maid arrived on the scene, the comedian had already come to equate a thrashing with affection. But the maid was a sweet, attentive young girl who did not beat him. He was therefore deprived of full enjoyment of her presence. In his adult life the comedian retained a fond memory of the maid but in his sexual charade with Erris he improved the memory by having the 'maid' administer a thrashing. His sexual release took the form of an affectionate prelude (a thrashing) followed by a re-creation of a consciously forgotten sensuality from infancy . . . the plastic coat (of the correct colour) in this case blue, ripped off in a simulation of a bursting balloon.

The comedian was a masochist-fetishist with homosexual inclinations.

The heavyweight boxer was also a masochist but his fetish originated when he wet his bed as a child. Again, his home environment was harsh and devoid of tenderness. His parents gave him no affection and actively hated him. Rather than have no attention from his parents, the child accepted a beating as a welcome substitute for total disinterest.

A beating was always administered when he wet his bed, which he did frequently. He was made to sleep on rubber sheets. In later years the association of wetting the bed, the rubber, a thrashing and attention was firmly embedded in his mind.

In a pathetic search for affection and love the heavyweight boxer re-created the childhood situation. His father had been the parent who administered the punishment. Therefore Erris re-created the father figure.

The boxer was a homosexual masochist with a fetish for 'golden rain', as deviants euphemistically term the penchant for being urinated upon.

The banker was a voyeur—one who enjoys watching sexual activity. In a home without any atmosphere of affection, the only gentleness he witnessed was the sexual coupling of his parents. As a child he witnessed his parents copulating. He interpreted the physical activity associated with the sex act as an assault upon his mother. His father was attacking his mother. The child's emotions were delicately poised. His parents gave him *no* affection. He subconsciously hated both his parents, but he hated his mother slightly less than he hated his father—due to his father being more overtly hostile to him than his mother. It gave the child pleasure to see his father 'assaulting' his mother.

This sexual experience in his formative years left the child with a strong aversion and guilt against being part of any such arrangement—the assaulting of a mother figure. Therefore he remained sexually non-active. However, he remembered that vicarious thrill of observing the

sex act. The possibility of re-creating that situation obsessed him—but to have re-created it with a mother-figure would have filled him with incestuous guilt.

The banker found his sexual release by compromise. He removed the mother-figure from the charade. Instead, the sexual act was performed by two men.

Erris's tragedy was that the passage of time is irresistible and homosexual love is essentially superficial and transitory. With nothing to build upon in a relationship, other than friendship and physical sex, it is inevitable that homosexuals should be promiscuous. There is no possibility of the unifying bond of children.

In later years, Erris became distinctly 'un-gay'. He fought the inroads of time with every means available but his beauty faded and so did his popularity. Between seventeen and twenty-five he was the child beauty, wooed and seduced by many older homosexuals. From twenty-five, he became more mature but needed to flirt and pursue constantly in order to find bed companions. After forty, his world crumbled. He became bitter and quick to destroy the reputations of others with ill-founded gossip. He had always been preoccupied with his looks. Now, he wore excessive make-up and adopted extravagant feminine gestures to advertise that he was 'gay' and available.

His final degradation was his '*first*' arrest for soliciting.

When Erris came to see me, I told him that I could not help him to cure his homosexuality. Absurd claims are made from time to time of 'cures' achieved among homosexuals. I do not know of any corroborated case. The homosexual character is established at an early age. Once formulated it cannot later be changed.

I tried to teach Erris awareness of his problem. After many sessions over a period of nearly two years, through appraising himself objectively Erris became adjusted to living with his homosexuality. He began to contain his sexuality within realistic boundaries and accepted the diminution of sexual activity as normal with advancing years.

3: Who's Been Sleeping in My Bed?

Alec Kincaid and his wife Margaret were watching television when they heard the baby cry. Margaret went to attend to the child.

She was away for a while and when she returned, Kincaid turned to her "What was it?"

She pulled a face. "He was wet."

"Really?" He frowned. "That's the third time this week, isn't it?"

"The fourth," she said.

"We're going to have to put a stop to this," said Kincaid, his mouth becoming grim.

The next evening young Kevin Kincaid lay in his cot and felt warm liquid flow around him. Gradually, the sensation become one of discomfort. He began to squall, crying and looking toward the door. It opened and his mother entered the room. Behind her was his father.

Alec Kincaid watched as his wife stripped the sheets from the bed. She picked Kevin up and gave him several smacks on his bottom. The child's features contorted and he cried even more loudly.

Kincaid picked up the moist sheets and thrust them at Kevin. The child's face touched against the wet material. "Dirty!" he said.

One night when he was a three-year-old, Kevin woke up to see his mother and father at his bedside. He could feel the familiar wetness about him. His father pulled the sheet from him. His parents looked at him lying on the wet bed, their faces set in lines of disapproval.

"It wasn't me, Mummy!" said Kevin. "Someone else has been sleeping in my bed!"

Alec Kincaid and Margaret exchanged an amused glance. This was something new!

"Who was it, Kevin?" asked Margaret.

"Donald Duck," said the boy. "He was right here in the bed with me, and he wet it."

Alec Kincaid laughed, unable to restrain himself.

"So it was Donald, was it? Well he'd better not come back tomorrow night, or there'll be trouble."

Three years later, Kevin Kincaid lay in bed. The lights were out in his bedroom. He could hear the television in the lounge.

He was nervous, afraid to fall asleep. But sleep gradually overtook him and after a short while his bladder voided. The wetness woke him. He lay trembling in the dark, whimpering with fear. The door opened and light fell upon his bed. His mother and father walked over to him.

"He's done it again," said his mother.

"You filthy little beast!" his father said, his features twisted with anger.

"He does it every night, he doesn't even try not to," said his mother wearily as she took the sheets from the bed.

"Like an animal . . . it's disgusting," said his father.

The child's eyes moved back and forth, from mother to father, watching the expressions of anger and distaste.

"There's nothing we can do any more," said Margaret. "We'll have to face it, he's a chronic bed-wetter."

"I suppose you're right," said Alec. "Any normal child would be trained by now."

"I'll buy some rubber sheets in the morning," said Margaret.

From then onwards, Kevin Kincaid slept on rubber sheets. Every night, without fail, he wet the bed.

Alec Kincaid stifled a yawn and glanced at his watch. Midnight. He went into his son's room. Kevin, aged ten, was sprawled across the bed, fast asleep. As he shook his son's shoulder to awaken him, Kincaid wondered wearily

whether this new tactic would do any good. Anyway, they had to try it.

Kevin woke up, and sleepily got out of bed. His father guided him to the toilet.

"Come on Kevin," he said. "Have a good wee and then we can all get some sleep."

Kevin stood there sleepily, trying to pass water. Nothing happened.

"There's nothing there, Dad," he said.

Kincaid shrugged. "Oh well. Let's go to sleep."

Kevin got back into bed and fell asleep. Two hours later he woke up. He'd wet the bed.

Kevin looked at the alarm clock, wondering what time he should set it for. It was brand new. His father had given it to him for his thirteenth birthday. It was 'guaranteed to wake the dead', his father had said. Kevin grinned wryly. It certainly woke him up, there was no doubt about that. The previous night he'd gone to sleep at 9 p.m. and he'd set the alarm for 1 a.m., planning to get up and go to the toilet. When he woke up to the alarm bell, he realised that he'd already wet the bed. It was now 9.15. He decided to take no chances. He set the alarm for midnight. He stretched out in bed and fell asleep.

At 12 the shrill alarm brought him awake. The bed was still dry. Pleased, Kevin went to the toilet and urinated. Then he came back to bed and fell asleep again.

He woke up again at 5 a.m. The mattress was drenched. He'd done it again.

When Kevin was twenty, he and his closest friend, Arthur, went ice-skating with their girl-friends, Amy and Louise.

Afterward, perspiring from their exertion, they had hot-dogs and coffee. They felt good, elated by the exercise and the atmosphere of the rink.

Arthur said: "I've an announcement to make. I've been saving it all day and if I don't come out with it now, I'm going to pop."

"Tell us, then!" cried Amy, and squeezed Kevin's arm.

"Well," said Arthur melodramatically, "I have an uncle, as you know . . ."

"Come on, Art!" said Kevin impatiently.

"He says we can use his cabin for the holiday weekend," said Arthur. "And it's not a run-of-the-mill cabin. This one has everything laid on. A couple of bedrooms and all mod cons."

"That's marvellous, Art," said Amy, with enthusiasm. "We can have a really terrific time. Louise and I will do the cooking." She gave a shriek of delight, as her enthusiasm grew. "A weekend in the mountains. Isn't that fantastic!"

"We can ski and skate," said Arthur. "That is, if we decide to go outdoors." He smiled.

"Darling, you're a genius," said Louise, and gave him an exaggerated kiss.

They all laughed, except Kevin.

"I don't think I'll be able to make it," he said.

Amy was astonished. "What do you mean, Kev . . . Why can't you make it?" The three of them looked at Kevin with blank amazement. They had already arranged to spend that weekend together.

"I've remembered something, that's all," said Kevin. "If you're going to the cabin you'll have to count me out. I'm sorry." He rose. "Let's go."

Their mood shattered, the others followed him.

Kevin strode ahead, his skates in his hand.

He thought: How can I go to the cabin with Amy. She'll expect me to share the bed with her. He felt a flush of embarrassment as he thought of the two of them, lying asleep in each other's arms. He thought how the tenderness would be extinguished . . . drenched in hot floods of urine.

Kevin put his hands to his eyes, wincing.

"What is it, darling?" It was Amy. She had come to his side so quietly he hadn't noticed.

"Nothing," he said briskly. "I'm tired, that's all."

He strode on. Amy watched him with puzzled eyes.

She decided that there was more to this than was apparent. She would have to talk with Kevin.

Amy and Kevin had been lovers for some time. They'd met eighteen months previously when Amy's father was transferred to the city. They were physically drawn to each other and quickly discovered that they thought along similar lines. Amy confidently expected that they would be married. They had discussed their future together once, but Kevin had grown cagey and changed the subject. Nevertheless, Amy knew that marriage was a definite possibility.

The more Amy thought about Kevin's change of mood, the more it worried her. That evening, she and Kevin were sitting on the porch. Kevin's parents had gone to bed earlier. Kevin was stretched out on an old sofa and Amy sat next to him.

"Kevin," she said, "we don't have any secrets, do we?"

He looked at her. "Of course not."

"Good." She became silent again. Kevin's curiosity was aroused.

"But why do you say that?"

She moved close and he felt her warmth.

"There's something worrying you. When we talked about going to the cabin. You clammed up suddenly, without warning."

She felt him stiffen.

"You see!" she said. "You've knotted up again!" She took his face in her hands. "What is it, darling? I wish you'd tell me."

He regarded her silently, on the defensive.

Amy sighed. "It's something to do with being alone with me. Isn't it?" She stood up and walked away, as though the distance between them symbolised the emotional gulf.

She said: "Because you spend a weekend with me doesn't mean that I'd expect you to marry me."

She looked at him defiantly. "You're old-fashioned enough to have a crazy idea like that, don't deny it!"

Kevin looked at his girl, her cheeks flushed with

emotion. She thought he was trying to avoid a deeper involvement. He took Amy in his arms, squeezing her. Then he laughed bitterly.

"Matrimony looming, so Kevin takes evading action! So that's how you see it?" He held her at arm's length. "I'm not stupid enough to try and escape from you!"

"Well, then, what is it?" Amy said.

Kevin looked at her desperately. He thought: I've got to tell someone, but I'll lose her! No! The rational part of his mind said, trust her.

"Well," he found himself stumbling over his words. Amy squeezed his hand reassuringly.

"I wet the bed," he said, so softly that Amy couldn't hear him.

"What?" she said.

"I wet the bed!" He moved away from her. "Every time I go to sleep I piss myself." His defiance made his voice ugly. "Every night of my life, without fail, since I was a baby."

He turned to Amy. She hadn't moved. He'd expected revulsion or disgust on her face. But he saw only concern.

"You poor darling," she said.

"I've never slept away from home. I didn't go to boarding school for that reason."

"Oh Kevin!" Amy came to him. "So that's why you didn't want to spend the weekend with me." She smiled broadly. "That's all it is! I thought it was something really serious..." She paused. "You know what I mean..."

Kevin held her tightly. "Don't you see! We could never lead a normal life. I sleep on rubber sheets!" He said it as though confessing a crime.

"Darling, do be sensible," said Amy. "You've got bladder trouble, that's all. It's not the end of the world, you know! Anyhow, maybe you'll stop wetting the bed. It's supposed to be in the mind, isn't it?"

"No such luck," said Kevin gloomily. "Everybody seems to think I'm incurable."

Amy laughed, high-spirited now that the mystery was solved.

"Really!" she said. "We're not going to let rubber sheets come between us, are we?"

Kevin relaxed at last.

Kevin and Amy were married a year later. During those twelve months, Amy, a practical girl, had come to terms with Kevin's bed-wetting. It was a fact and she adjusted to it. When they prepared for their honeymoon, Amy made sure the rubber sheets were packed. She and Kevin automatically structured their lives around Kevin's inability to control his bladder. After the wedding they drove to a nearby village where they had booked a hotel room. It was an old inn, quiet and rustic, with wholesome food.

They dined in a leisurely fashion and although it was his honeymoon night Kevin was careful not to exceed his quota of liquids. Finally they went to their room.

Amy had already re-made the other bed with the rubber sheets.

They undressed and made love, passionately. Then they made love again, in a more relaxed and tender way. They discussed their plans for the future. In the early hours of the morning they made love again, slowly and languorously. Amy snuggled against her husband and soon fell asleep, breathing deeply. Kevin felt content. He lay, enjoying the warmth and the togetherness.

He woke with a start, horrified. Oh my God! he thought in despair. I've done it! I fell asleep! He could feel the hot urine around him. Next to him Amy was moving, half asleep, trying to avoid the discomfort of the wetness. Suddenly she was awake, taking in the situation.

"Amy," he said, gripped in embarrassment. He had lived this moment in countless nightmares. Now the fear was reality. How could he have been stupid enough to fall asleep with Amy?

"Help me change the sheets, darling," said Amy and got out of bed to fetch towels from the bathroom. They

dried themselves. Her matter-of-fact attitude reduced Kevin's embarrassment.

Later he climbed into his own bed with the rubber sheets. He didn't wet the bed again that night.

As the years passed, Kevin and Amy lived a rewarding married life. They had children, and Kevin became a director of numerous companies.

Every night he slept between the rubber sheets and every night he wet the bed.

When Kevin was in his mid-forties he saw an advertisement for a new machine which provided a 'fool-proof' method for training chronic bed-wetters. Without saying anything to Amy, he sent for the device. A parcel duly arrived and he inspected it eagerly.

In theory, as soon as the user of the device began to pass water, an alarm would be set off, enabling him to stop the bed-wetting. Constant use would create an aversion that would make bed-wetting a thing of the past, said the accompanying pamphlet.

That night Kevin went to bed without telling Amy about the new machine. He connected it and went to sleep.

A piercing siren went off next to his ear and brought him bolt upright in bed. Startled, he looked around him. Amy was sitting up in her bed, staring at him with astonishment. Gradually the blaring alarm ran down until it spluttered into silence.

Kevin had wet the bed again.

Amy shook her head knowingly. "So you fell for another one. Oh Kevin, if only you'd stop trying out crackpot ideas and just accept things."

Kevin had to agree. He had bought an expensive piece of equipment and all it did was startle the life out of him and wake him up to the fact that he had passed water, as usual.

He disconnected the machine and threw it in the corner. He was so awake he knew he wouldn't be able to go back to sleep for some time. Amy was alert too. He sat, holding her hand.

She sighed. "It doesn't get any better, does it?"

"D'you realise that in two weeks I'll be forty-five?" said Kevin.

"Forty-five and still wetting the bed. It's unbelievable, I must be some sort of medical freak. Who ever heard of a middle-aged man who couldn't control his bladder? It's not as though I have a physical deficiency. When I had my check-up last month I had them take a good look at my water-works," he said. "Nothing wrong at all." Kevin stood and paced about. "There's another convention coming and I can't get out of it. Three nights in a hotel."

"Oh dear," said Amy.

"Three nights of smuggling rubber sheets and redoing the bed . . . It's humiliating."

Amy took her husband's hands in hers. "Darling, won't you go and see a psychologist? I'm not suggesting you're round the bend" . . . she laughed at the thought . . . "it's just that I have a feeling that he might be able to help you."

Kevin looked at his wife appraisingly.

"I might as well," he said. "I've nothing to lose." He smiled. "Except the rubber sheets!"

CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS

Bed-wetting into adulthood, is far more widespread than most people would imagine. It is a problem which creates havoc sexually, makes marital relationships precarious and causes a deep sense of inferiority.

This anguish and humiliation has its origins in the misguided behaviour of parents.

Bed-wetting is normal in the very young. Left to themselves, most children stop wetting the bed because they dislike the sensation of lying in moist discomfort. The brain soon trains the bladder not to void during sleep. If this natural process of error and correction is interfered with by zealous parents, lasting damage is done.

In Kevin's case, he wet his bed like any other infant. Then he felt discomfort, and cried. Kevin soon discovered that when he cried, his mother would rush into his room

and pay attention to him. He began to wet his bed deliberately as an attention-getting stratagem. Like all young children, Kevin craved attention.

Matters became complicated when, by repeatedly wetting his bed, Kevin invoked not only attention but parental wrath. Kevin's father overreacted. He and Kevin's mother showed their disgust, in verbal comments and facial disdain. Kevin's father even rubbed the boy's nose against the damp sheets and reiterated the word: "Dirty!" They made a performance of stripping the sheets and washing them. They made biting comments about Kevin's 'filthy habit'.

It was fed into Kevin's mind that he *must not* wet the bed. The elementary physical function of passing water was transformed into an evil and shameful act. A psychological spanner was thrown into Kevin's water-works.

When Kevin told his parents that he was not to blame for wetting the bed and it was actually Donald Duck who did it, he was not lying. He had wet the bed, and in his sleep became conscious of it. He then dreamed that Donald Duck entered his bed and passed water. At that point his parents awakened him. The dream and reality became confused in his childish mind.

When Kevin's father awakened him to take him to the bathroom, and then commanded his son to urinate, Kevin was unable to do so. Under coercion he could not force his bladder to work. But as soon as he went back to bed and relaxed in sleep, he voided his bladder.

His attempts to regulate himself by using an alarm clock were doomed to failure. His subconscious mind always succeeded in defeating the attempt.

Before going to sleep, Kevin dreaded passing water. He rationed his intake of liquids, and exerted a conscious pressure on his mind trying to make sure that he would control his bladder. When he fell asleep, his brain relaxed and, in mental inversion, voided his bladder . . . precisely opposite to his intention.

This was dramatically demonstrated by Kevin on his wedding night. He did what he feared most.

Because bed-wetting is the cause of discomfort and humiliation, bed-wetters go to great lengths to cope with their problem. They spend large sums of money on gadgets, such as the urinary alarm purchased by Kevin.

When Kevin came to see me he quickly grasped the logic of my methods and enthusiastically applied them.

The technique is to encourage the bed-wetter to do what he fears most . . . to wet the bed.

Bed-wetters normally ration their intake of liquids before retiring. I ask them to do the opposite.

I told Kevin: "Drink at least three pints before you go to bed. Be determined to wet that bed more than usual. As you normally set the alarm for four o'clock in the morning to awaken you so you can go to the toilet, don't set the alarm. Don't bother! Keep your rubber sheets on the bed. You'll need them! Remember, you've wet the bed every night of your life. It can't do any harm to wet it deliberately for a few more weeks."

After three or four nights of deliberately steering *into* his fear, and consciously trying to wet the bed, Kevin discovered that he was on his way to a cure. He was establishing a new pattern of thought. The more he *tried* to wet the bed, the more difficult it became for him to succeed.

Then, Kevin suffered a relapse. He said to himself: "I'm nearly cured. I've only wet the bed once this week. I'll try hard *not* to wet it tonight."

That night he wet the bed. He had slipped into the old habit of steering *away* from his anxiety.

Kevin persevered, however, and after only three weeks was completely cured.

For the first time Kevin and Amy were able to sleep in the same bed. At last he threw away the rubber sheets, his constant companions since infancy.

4: The Baby Man

Malcolm Scott stood in the big bay window, surveying the grounds of his home. It was a big old house, built in the spacious era of the 1750s. He could see the stretch of neatly kept lawn, the trees on the verge, and the lane which led to the pond. Beyond were the soft contours of farmland pastures.

Now that he was doing really well, Scott had permitted himself the luxury of this permanent home in the country. The rustic peace was a boon. His wife, Isabel, enjoyed country life and it was a healthy environment for their infant son, Richard.

Scott was tall without an ounce of fat on him. He had a tooth-brush moustache and his hair was cut short, in the Prussian style. Scott admired the Prussians. The Prussians and the Spartans, they had known what they were doing. They were disciplined and dedicated. The key to success.

Scott stood, his hands clasped behind his back, rocking back and forth from heel to toe. It was a characteristic stance, and Isabel was fond of pointing out that he looked as though he were reviewing a regiment. Scott thought his wife flippant at times, but he made allowances for her being a female.

At that moment Isabel came into the room, holding young Richard.

"Look at him, Malcolm! Isn't he beautiful!"

Scott peered at the pink face.

"Strange to think that this little bundle of flesh will be a grown-up person, one day, isn't it?" murmured Isabel wonderingly.

"I'll tell you one thing," said Scott firmly. "He'll be prepared for life. I'll see to that."

"What do you mean?" asked Isabel,

"Preparation. It's no use jumping in the deep end if you can't swim. Richard will have every opportunity scholastically."

Isabel watched the enthusiasm in her husband's eyes. He was stern, but she loved his decisiveness. Isabel was the complete opposite to her husband. All she wanted was to keep the peace and make everyone happy.

"When the boy's a bit older," said Malcolm, "I'll make a work schedule for him, like the Spartans did."

Isabel looked puzzled, so Scott explained.

"The Spartans had to be powerful to survive, so they developed a strong life-style. They sternly discouraged comforts. Anything frivolous was frowned upon. They were trained from infancy to have muscles of iron and minds of steel."

Isabel affected a look of mock alarm. "I hope you're not going to turn the poor child into a robot!" she said.

"No, no," said Scott impatiently. "But his life will be rigidly controlled. For one thing, he'll have very few toys."

"Toys?" Isabel was shocked.

"That's right," said Scott. "Toys are a distraction, a weakness."

Isabel left the room with the baby and Scott continued his vigil at the window. One day, he thought, my son will bring honour to this family.

Richard had just finished supper. Now he was in the bathroom, getting ready for bed. When he had finished his toilet he went downstairs to his father. It was time for inspection.

Scott put down the paper and watched his son approach. Richard was seven. Scott was sure that when he was fully grown he would be tall and impressive-looking. And so he should be.

"Right! Let's have a look," he said.

Richard put out his hands so his father could inspect them, then turned them over. The palms were clean, so were the fingernails.

The boy stood silently while his father looked at the

back of his neck and then inspected his ears to ensure he was free from grime.

"Seems all right," said Scott. He looked at his watch. "There's a new book on your bed. I want you to study it for the next thirty minutes. Then put out the light and go to sleep."

"Yes, father," said Richard. He stood, not sure what he was waiting for.

"All right then," said his father impatiently. "Go to your room."

"Yes, father."

When Richard reached the landing, out of sight of his father, he found his mother waiting.

She scooped him up and kissed him. "You smell lovely," she said. She took his hand and together they went into the bedroom.

"I've brought you something," said Isabel, and gave him a slice of pie. Richard's eyes widened with pleasure.

"And when you've finished, make sure there are no crumbs or Daddy will be angry." She kissed him again and went downstairs.

Richard enjoyed the pie. Then he removed the evidence and began to study the book. It was colourful and he found it interesting. He remembered to keep an eye on the clock and after he'd been reading for thirty minutes he shut the book, switched off the light and climbed back into bed. He knew from experience that if he didn't obey his father's orders to the letter, he would be in trouble.

Before barely a minute had elapsed, his father's figure appeared in the doorway. He said nothing, merely watched Richard as he lay pretending to be asleep, and then quietly walked away.

Richard felt excited as he stood quietly in front of his mother.

"That's fine," said Isabel approvingly. "He looks really God-fearing, doesn't he, Malcolm?"

Malcolm Scott glanced across, reluctant to be distracted from his Sunday papers.

"Hmmm. Seems smart enough." He went back to the magazine section.

"Now off you go and don't get yourself dirty on the way," said Isabel. She walked him out of the front door and as soon as they were out of the house she bent down and hugged him. "Come straight back," she said.

Richard walked off, feeling elated. He was supposed to be on his way to morning service. His father never went to church but his mother usually accompanied him. Today his mother, too, had stayed at home and he was being sent to church on his own.

Richard broke into a run and dashed to the back of the house. He went into a copse and put his hand into the trunk of an old tree. The big flat stone was just as he'd left it. He lifted it out and put it on the ground. The sweets and the comics he'd bought yesterday were still there. He popped a couple of sweets into his mouth, then felt farther back in the cavity and pulled out a miniature car. He examined it with total concentration. Then he glanced about him nervously, put the toy car, the sweets and the comics in his pockets and ran around to the front of the house.

As he hurried along the tree-lined roadways he caught a glimpse of the village clock. He had an hour and fifteen minutes. Instead of turning left, toward the church, Richard veered off along a footpath and was soon lost to view in the shrubbery. Richard knew where he was going. He had a secret place near the stream. He often went there. It was private and beautiful and he could day-dream—how one day he would be a successful man like his father and have people running, obeying his commands.

Richard pushed through the bushes into the clearing. It was secluded, the sort of place one only discovered by accident—which was how Richard had first found it. He sat on the grass and took out his sweets and his comics. He placed the car on the ground where he could see it.

Two days ago his father had given him money to buy a pair of compasses. In the village, Richard saw rows of

miniature cars in a shop window. He looked at the prices. He could afford one car with the money his father had given him. The toy in the window held enchantment for Richard. On impulse he went inside and bought the car. He used the money left over to buy sweets and some comic books.

On the way home he felt so guilty he nearly threw everything away. Then he thought of Sunday and how it was likely that he'd be sent to church on his own. That decided him. He hid his treasures carefully and waited impatiently for Sunday.

Richard had been enjoying his private world for no more than five minutes when he heard the sound of heavy footsteps. He turned, mouth open, clutching the toy car. A hand swept aside the foliage and Richard saw his father.

Malcolm Scott had his walking stick in his hand. He used it to turn over the comic books lying on the grass. Then he poked at the packets of sweets and noticed that Richard's hand was white-knuckled.

"Open your hand," he commanded, and tapped Richard smartly with the stick.

The miniature car fell to the grass. Malcolm Scott turned it over with his toe. Then with a jab of his heel crushed it.

"Junk!" he said. He ripped the comics into shreds and threw them in the stream. Richard watched them floating away. He hadn't even had a chance to read them. The sweets were scattered into the bushes.

"On your feet," said Malcolm Scott. He grabbed his son and hauled him homewards.

"You'll be nine years old next month, and look at you! Wasting your time on rubbishy comics, munching sweets like a schoolgirl. I'll have to take you in hand."

Richard began to shake. He'd been thrashed by his father before.

Malcolm Scott made Richard stand in front of his mother, like an accused in the dock. Then he said: "I gave Richard some money to buy articles for school. He

squandered it. And then, when he should have been in church, went for a feast."

Isabel looked at her son reproachfully.

"What are you going to do?" she asked her husband timidly.

"Six cuts with the black stick," said Scott. "And from now on I'm going to take a particular interest in *everything* Richard does. He'll have to be put on a stricter regimen."

Isabel sat silently while Scott took Richard into the study. She heard the muted thwack of the stick as it fell on her son. She winced with each blow.

Richard was crying uncontrollably when they re-emerged. Isabel took the boy upstairs and as soon as they were out of Malcolm's sight he pathetically threw his arms around her neck. His tears flowed and she kissed him, making reassuring noises. Gradually his sobbing subsided until he lay whimpering quietly on the bed.

"Isabel!" She heard Malcolm shout. She went downstairs in reply but felt she must reproach her husband.

"He's only a boy, Malcolm. You seem to forget."

"On the contrary, it's always in my thoughts. The child is father to the man."

"But surely there's no harm in his having a toy to play with? For goodness sake, Malcolm, what's a child's life without toys?"

"There'll be plenty of time for playing once Richard has settled down in a profession. But *now* is the time when he must prepare."

Richard sat solemnly and watched his mother dry her tears. His own emotions were chaotic but his overriding wish was that his mother would stop crying.

They had just returned from the cemetery. For three months there had been gloom over the house as Malcolm Scott had sickened and died.

Now, Richard and his mother were alone, free of sobbing relatives and consoling friends.

Richard was fifteen. He was big for his age.

"What are we going to do, mother?" he asked.

"Carry on as usual, Richard," said Isabel. She beckoned to her son and he sat close to her. She put her hand on his shoulder.

"The last thing your father wanted was for you to complete your education. You know how concerned he was about your studies. I think you owe him that, don't you?"

Richard nodded, but he felt resentful.

"Your father left me well provided, thank goodness," said Isabel. "So we'll carry on as before."

Two months later Richard was lying on his bed when he heard his mother's footsteps on the stairs. He slid the novel he had been reading under his pillow and sat at the desk covered with textbooks. He picked up his pen.

His mother knocked and entered. She carried a tray.

"A late snack, dear," she said, and put down an assortment of sandwiches and biscuits.

"Thanks, mum," said Richard. Isabel squeezed his arm and went out. From the doorway she said: "Don't strain your eyes!"

"I shan't," he said. He tucked into the food, went back to the bed and re-opened the novel.

Richard failed his examinations. But the results did not depress him.

"I'm not the academic type, mother," he said. "I'm full of ideas. You'll see! I'm going to be a really successful businessman!"

In spite of her disappointment, Isabel smiled. Richard was irresistible when he was in an ebullient mood. He radiated optimism and confidence. Richard was eighteen, a healthy, vigorous young man.

"Tell me your ideas, Richard," she said.

"Well, I want to start a weekly dance in the village. People are fed up with travelling fourteen miles for entertainment. I've made enquiries and I can get the village hall very cheaply."

Isabel nodded, surprised and impressed. "That sounds a very good idea!" she said.

"I've worked it all out," said Richard. "The hall will hold five hundred people. I'll charge five shillings admittance and I'll make £125 a week."

"As much as that!" said Isabel.

"Easily," said Richard. "You'd be surprised how much money there is in entertainment."

"When do you plan to start?"

"No time like the present," answered Richard cheerfully.

Isabel agreed to help with the finance.

Richard made a list of priorities. To attract the crowds he would have to secure first-class musicians. And to recruit them he would have to travel frequently to the town forty miles away. He would obviously have to be mobile, preparing and organising. He would need a car. That day he acquired a car on hire purchase. His mother paid the deposit.

Richard threw himself wholeheartedly into the undertaking with all of his considerable energy.

He had costed for posters to be printed and properly displayed at £20 a week, but he discovered a printer who was prepared to sell a poster machine for only £300. Why spend £20 a week indefinitely when he could do the job himself for £300? Richard persuaded Isabel that the machine was a good investment and she made the down payment. He showed his mother his detailed profit and loss account for the weekly dance. The profit margin was so large he was confident he would be able to repay his mother very soon.

Richard decided he needed a secretary. He placed a double column advertisement in the local paper. There were several applicants. He chose the prettiest—at £12 a week.

Then he began to look for musicians. One evening he heard an exciting trio. He spoke to the leader and told him about his Saturday dance. The leader, a pianist, agreed it was a good idea.

"But to make it pay you need something different, something people will talk about, something that'll bring them back the following week."

"That's my thinking," said Richard enthusiastically.

"Well," said the pianist, "make it a quartet? I know a great musician. He plays three instruments. That means we'll be able to get a much bigger sound. It'll be worth the extra money, I promise you."

Richard agreed.

Now that things were becoming organised, Richard needed an office. The ony suitable premises he could find were on a six months' lease, payable in advance. He explained the situation to his mother and she sent the agent a cheque.

Richard ordered embossed notepaper bearing 'Richard Scott Enterprises' from the best printer in town.

Next, he made the posters and was delighted with the result. They were bright, bold and drew attention. Richard and his secretary, Rita, scoured the village and the surrounding district to find suitable positions. They found that to catch the public's eye the posters needed to be displayed in shop windows or behind the cash desks of supermarkets. The only way they could persuade the shopkeepers to display the posters was to offer free tickets to the dance.

After a few days of distributing posters, Rita said to Richard with concern: "Do you know we've given away eighty tickets already?"

"I know," said Richard. "But this is the first dance and at least the free tickets will help to fill the hall. I want an atmosphere right from the start. Everything has to be perfect!"

A week before the dance the band-leader phoned Richard to tell him of a snag that had arisen. The fourth musician no longer had a van to transport the group and their equipment to and from the hall.

"We'll hire a mini-bus," said Richard. This was an expense he had not anticipated, but there was still a healthy profit margin.

Three days before the dance, Isabel asked Richard to join her for a cup of tea and chat. She was keen to find out how her son's business was progressing. She had a practical interest, too, having invested a substantial sum of money.

"How are things going, Richard?" she asked.

"Very well indeed, mother," he said, grinning with enthusiasm. "It's going to be a night the village will never forget!"

"Any problems?"

Richard waved a reassuring hand. "Nothing serious. There have been one or two last-minute difficulties, but one expects that sort of thing."

"Tell me about them," encouraged Isabel.

"Well, the musicians. I decided on a quartet instead of of a trio, so I could include that brilliant musician who plays all sorts of instruments. Well, I discovered yesterday that he's very much in demand and the only way I could be sure of getting him was to sign him and the others for twelve weeks. That way, I know I'll have continuity."

"I see," said Isabel. "Twelve weeks. That's a big financial risk."

"It would be if there wasn't any money coming in," said Richard. He leaned forward and patted his mother's knee reassuringly. "But it'll be a great success, you'll see. And don't worry about your money. I'll repay every penny of it."

Isabel suddenly noticed Richard's hands. He was impeccably dressed in a new suit (he'd opened a charge account), his shirt was double cuffed and on his wrist was the watch she'd recently bought him. But Isabel's eyes were on his nails. She pointed with a mother's proprietory displeasure. "Richard, your nails are filthy! If only you would realise what a bad impression it makes. Go and clean them at once."

Richard pulled a face but got up and did as he was told. When he resumed his seat, Isabel returned to the subject of the dance.

"Any other last-minute problems?" she asked.

"Not problems," said Richard. "But I need someone to stand at the door and sell tickets. I don't want to have to do it myself."

"I quite agree, dear," said Isabel.

"So I've hired a girl who was recommended to me. She seems an honest type of person. Also, I heard there are a gang of troublemakers about, so I've hired a couple of bouncers."

Richard stretched his arms, flashing his cuff-links.

"I want everything to be efficient and perfect!"

Isabel smiled her approval. "You seem to have thought of everything, Richard. I'm sure it will be a great success."

On the night of the dance the village hall was packed. At least a hundred people had to be turned away. Afterwards there were a few complaints which Richard regarded as minor. There had been no one in charge of the cloakroom and several people complained that coats were missing. Two people threatened to sue.

But the place had been packed. After everyone had gone home, Richard sat down to calculate his profit. To his astonishment he discovered that the dance had incurred a loss of £60, after taking the expenses into consideration. He was flabbergasted.

But the more he thought about it the more philosophical he became. After all, this was only the beginning. Things would improve. He would see to that.

Richard hired someone to sell refreshments and engaged a cloakroom attendant for the following weekend. He also went ahead with his other arrangements. He completed the furnishing of his office, buying everything on hire purchase. Rita complained that their second-hand typewriter was more trouble than it was worth, so Richard bought a brand new one. Isabel paid the deposit.

The second dance was also capacity. But Richard was disappointed with the money taken on refreshments. He was sure the person in charge had been fiddling.

In spite of the improvements made, since the previous week, Richard had lost another £55.

On the Tuesday of the following week Richard received a letter from the committee which rented out the village hall. There had been complaints about excessive noise and they had decided not to lease the hall for future dances.

There were no alternative halls anywhere in the area. Richard was stumped. His short career as a promoter was over—but he was still committed to the musicians and the hire-purchase agreements he had signed.

He decided to give back the typewriter and cut his losses wherever possible. Richard said he needed the car, so he retained that. He reached a compromise with the band and returned the office furniture. After he had sorted everything out, Isabel had lost £1,000.

"But it wasn't your fault, dear," she said consolingly. "Who could have known that those old fuddy-duddies would stop the dances? I'm sure you would have made a good profit."

"Luck was against me," agreed Richard.

A village was too limiting, Richard decided. With his mother's approval he moved to town and searched for a suitable flat. He found what he wanted—a luxury furnished apartment. It was expensive but Richard didn't believe in quibbling. He persuaded Isabel to sign the lease for a year.

"All I need is your signature, mother," he told her. "I'll pay the rent. Don't you worry."

After Richard had been in his new home for a month, and had explored the night life of the city, he started looking for a job.

Alone in his apartment, wearing the dark maroon dressing-gown he'd just bought on his charge account at Anderson's, Richard thought carefully about his future.

He was convinced that he was a 'super-salesman'. He sat, visualising himself as irresistibly persuasive.

He looked through the newspaper, marking the advertisements for salesmen.

Richard found a job almost at once. He was so well-dressed, young, confident and had such an easy flow of speech, that he looked as though he could accomplish the impossible. In most cases, that was precisely what was required of him.

His first job was as a door to door canvasser, selling enormous Bibles bound in white leather. The cost per Bible: £50.

After a few weeks of vain effort, Richard switched his 'line'. This time he sold washing-machines from door to door. The machine was a completely unknown brand. People had never heard of it and they mistrusted it. But Richard learned a lot about washing-machines. An occasional sale boosted Richard's confidence and brought in some commission but he eventually realised that he was flogging a dead horse.

His next selling job was even more unusual. He visited cafés and restaurants, trying to sell large canisters of unbranded perfumed disinfectant. After two months with this firm Richard came home early one day. He was depressed. It was three in the afternoon and the weather was wet and cold. He made himself coffee and sprawled across the settee. He'd been in this apartment for five months now, and in that time he'd tried a variety of jobs. None had been successful—not because of his shortcomings, but because he had been asked to sell the unsellable.

Richard felt hungry. There was no food in the kitchen. He took out a bottle of milk but it was off. He threw it in the rubbish bin.

Things looked bad.

On impulse, he went to the writing desk and took out a sheet of paper.

"Dear Mother," he wrote. "I trust you are keeping well. The pace here in the city is hectic and the business world is most challenging. I have several exciting prospects and hope my business arrangements will be well in hand during the course of the next few weeks.

"To consolidate the progress I have already made, I need some capital and would therefore be most grateful if you could send me a cheque for £250.

"In the near future I shall repay the loan with generous interest."

He wrote an affectionate preface to his signature and sealed the envelope. He would post it in the morning.

Now that the letter was written, Richard felt in a much better mood. He decided to go to a fabulous discothèque he had discovered. There would be plenty of girls, and female company was what he needed tonight!

For the next few years Richard drifted from one selling job to another. A salesman has to be adaptable. He sold advertising space for a magazine, but left because the commission was too small. Richard did not manage to sell any advertisements, but he chafed at the thought of how small his commission would be *if* he scored an advertising coup and sold a full page to a national advertiser.

He also sold carbon paper door to door, vacuum cleaners, photographic enlargers and horoscope books. But the pickings were small.

On Richard's twenty-first birthday, his mother bought him a new sports car and gave him £500 to encourage him to new efforts in business.

When Isabel gave Richard the cheque, he wouldn't hear of it.

"It's a wonderful gesture, mother," he told her, "but I can't accept it as a gift. Regard it as a business investment which will more than double itself—and soon, too!"

Six months after his birthday Richard went to a party in a friend's apartment. He was introduced to a girl he was immediately attracted to.

"Richard, I'd like you to meet Betty Agnelli."

Betty had typically Italian good looks. Her brown eyes were warm and good-natured, with a trace of fire. Richard asked her to dance and he found her physically stimulating.

Betty had never set foot in Italy, although both her parents were born there. She was an only child.

He offered to drive her home and she accepted. Their interest in each other was so intense that neither of them wanted to part, so Richard parked in a secluded spot where they could talk.

"What do you do for a living, Richard?" she asked him. She reached for a cigarette and he lighted it for her with his gold Dunhill (another present from Isabel).

"Isn't that a beauty!" said Betty, noticing the precision-made instrument.

Richard simply smiled, and put the lighter into a pocket of his immaculately cut suit. "You wanted to know what I did," he said.

"Yes, that's right," said Betty with eager interest.

"It's difficult to define, really," said Richard. "My interests range across such a wide field." He thought for a moment of the multitude of schemes he'd conceived in the past year. They ranged from deep-sea salvage to the reclamation of cardboard.

"I suppose I'm an ideas man," said Richard finally. "And I'm heading one way only, and that's right to the top."

"What sort of things have you been involved in so far, Richard?" asked Betty, admiringly. She hadn't met such an aggressively successful young man before and she was extremely impressed.

"Well," said Richard, wondering where to begin. He saw the pretty young woman looking at him with such obvious interest that his mind leaped with confidence.

"I had a washing-machine factory, but I was 'taken-over' after a while by a competitor," he lied grandly. "They offered me so much money I couldn't refuse." He smiled, as though remembering one more fortune, easily made.

"How exciting," said Betty, her eyes shining.

He took her home and they arranged to meet later that week.

As he drove to his apartment Richard thought back on

the evening. There was an indefinable quality about Betty which appealed to him strongly. It wasn't her looks or her sexuality, although he was appreciative of both. It was something else but he couldn't define it. Anyway, he knew how he felt.

Betty lay awake for a long time that night. Richard was rich and successful. He seemed ideal, the sort of person who could give her emotional security and material security. She sighed, wondering how their friendship would progress. Then she turned over and fell asleep.

Six months after they met, Richard and Betty were married. Although Richard was twenty-two and Betty was twenty-five, everyone thought it a perfect match.

Isabel was delighted. She had liked Betty from the moment they met and she told Betty so. "I think you're the best thing that could have happened to my son, dear," she said. "He needs a good, motherly girl like you to help him settle down."

To show her approval Isabel told Richard to 'forget' the money she had advanced him in the past. And she gave the couple a wedding present of £1,000 in cash.

Betty's parents also approved, and matched Isabel's cash gift.

The wedding presents were many and expensive. Betty prized particularly a silver tea set, a gift from her grandmother.

They went on an extended honeymoon and travelled widely. On their return Richard wanted to find a bigger apartment, but Betty insisted that his bachelor pad was grand enough to easily accommodate the two of them.

Betty returned to her job. She was the sort of girl who was driven to distraction by prolonged inactivity. While Betty was at work, Richard would go to his mysterious business discussions.

One morning when Betty had to be up early she gently shook her husband awake.

"Darling," she said, "I have to rush but don't forget to

leave a cheque for the housekeeping." She kissed him quickly and left.

Richard was suddenly wide awake. He heard the front door close gently as Betty left. The housekeeping money. He felt an emptiness in his stomach. He was absolutely broke. He didn't have enough money for cigarettes.

He got up and made himself a cup of coffee. The past few months had been so carefree that he hadn't even deigned to think about getting a job. It was only yesterday he'd realised that his credit was strained to the limit.

The thought of admitting to Betty that they had no money was too humiliating to think of.

What am I going to do? he thought desperately.

It was no good writing to his mother. He needed the money now, today. He thought: I'll pawn my lighter, and my watch. The idea relieved his anxiety for a moment. Then another possibility occurred to him. He smiled, pleased with the solution.

Some days later Richard came home to find his wife in tears.

"What's wrong?" he asked.

"We've been robbed," she sobbed. "Someone has stolen the silver tea set."

Richard stood motionless, covered in guilt and embarrassment.

"We'll have to call the police," said Betty. "That set is worth a fortune."

God, thought Richard, I can't call the police, I'll make a fool of myself.

"Come here, darling," he said, taking Betty by the arm and leading her to the couch. "Sit down and relax. I've something to tell you."

Betty looked mystified.

"I pawned the tea set," he said.

"*You* took it?!"

"Yes, I had to."

"But why, Richard. Why?" She looked at him wide-eyed. "Pawning granny's wedding present! It's so... so..." She searched for the right word, "so *sordid*!"

Now that he'd confessed, Richard unburdened his mind of everything. Betty looked in disbelief as he told her how they'd been living on the wedding-present money for the past months and that he had *no* business interest and *no* job.

Betty's Italian temper exploded. She scolded her husband like a naughty child. He sat, silent and shame-faced.

"You owe it to me to tell the truth, Richard," she said. "I'm your wife. We're together in everything."

As quickly as her temper had flared, it was gone. She put her arms around her husband and hugged him.

"Anyway, things aren't so bad! I still have my work, and at least I earn enough to feed us! But the first thing we must do is to find you a job."

As Betty went through the newspapers, she let out an excited cry. "Darling! This seems ideal. You used to sell washing-machines, didn't you, so you must know about them. Look at this advertisement!"

Encouraged by Betty's enthusiasm, Richard studied the ad. An American firm was introducing a new washing-machine and was looking for sales agents. The next day Richard applied. The washing-machine was a superior piece of machinery. It had new, additional gadgets and its price was competitive. The firm backed all hire-purchase agreements and didn't require a deposit—only the payment of the first week's hire-purchase. The customer could even return the machine after a week's use if he didn't like it.

Richard was hired on terms which delighted him. He would receive twenty per cent of the retail price on each machine sold by him, payable after eight days. (If the purchaser had not exercised his option to return the goods.)

Osgood Williams, a vice-president of the parent company in America, gave the new recruits a personal interview. He was a tall ex-military man with a positive air.

He looked Richard straight in the eye and told him to go out and sell, then sell again.

"You have a fine product, the best that American knowhow can create, and that's about the best in the

whole damn world," he said. "Go out and do it justice."

Fired by the pep-talk and his own confidence in the washing-machine, Richard did exactly what Williams had exhorted him to do. He excelled himself. After four months, Richard's sales figures were so impressive they elicited a letter from the States. Richard was informed that his sales figures were the highest in the British Isles.

Osgood Williams, now the president of the company, would be in London in a fortnight and would like to see him.

Richard put down the letter, beaming. He passed it to Betty and she gave a delightful squeal and rushed to kiss him.

Richard had good reason to be pleased with himself. He was earning £120 a week after tax. He had persuaded Betty to give up her job. He convinced her that it was important she should accompany him socially. She looked more elegant and sophisticated than ever but now she wore nothing but the best.

Richard had indulged himself as usual. As soon as he began to earn money, he bought himself everything he wanted. He now owned a gold Rolex chronometer, Leica camera, and a complete home-movie kit. He also had a collection of strange battery-operated toys. There was a duck which waddled along, quacking, its eyes lighting up. A mechanical Charlie Chaplin which imitated the clown's famous dance, and dozens of others. Richard was fond of showing these ingenious toys to visitors.

Richard and Betty enjoyed their prosperity. They had no money, but they had no reason to think that the flow of Richard's earnings would stop. On the contrary, even better things were on the horizon.

Richard paused outside the office door, straightened himself and went in. As he entered, Osgood Williams rose to his feet and moved to meet him, hand outstretched.

"Good to see you Mr Scott," said O.W., as he was known in the firm. "Good to see you." He showed Richard to a chair.

Williams came to the point at once.

"You know how pleased we are with your sales figures. There's no need to say it again. I've said it already in my letter." He beamed at Richard.

"So you did, Mr Williams."

"Call me O.W.," said the president, and grinned. "Everyone else does. And I'll call you Richard. I like to be on first name terms, especially with valued colleagues."

"Of course, er . . . O.W.," said Richard, feeling a trifle uncertain.

"Now, I'll put it to you straight. We want *you* to take over our entire operation in the British Isles. We want you to have our franchise."

Richard was temporarily stunned by the magnitude of the offer.

"You set up the whole operation, establish your own chain of command, and take an overriding commission. What do you say to that?"

Williams stood. He was tall and impressive, with close-cropped hair. Every gesture rang with authority.

"I can only say Yes, and thank you," said Richard. He stood up as well. He felt deferential and grateful to Williams. He would never let him down. Richard knew he would put every effort into making this project a total success. He felt the sting of tears. He was as moved as he had ever been.

"Shall we shake on it?" said Williams.

Richard grasped his hand fervently.

"I took the liberty of anticipating your acceptance, Richard, so I had a little memento made, to mark the occasion." He reached into his packet, took out a box and opened it. Inside was a wafer-slim gold cigarette case. He handed it to Richard.

Richard studied the case. It was inscribed: "To a long and lasting friendship, O.W."

Richard looked at O.W. He didn't trust himself to speak.

Richard wasted no time. The next day he hired a suite

of offices in the West End of London—and was delighted when the agent did not insist on the rental in advance. The integrity of Richard's parent company was accepted without question. In order to function as the franchise-holder and set up a new operation, Richard knew he would have to do a lot of travelling. He'd have no time for the business of selling. So he would need capital. And he had no reserves in the bank.

Richard and Betty visited Richard's mother, who was delighted to see them again. Richard explained how he had been offered the chance of a lifetime but needed hard cash to take advantage of it.

Isabel was impressed by the deal. She gave him £2,000. Richard insisted she regard it as a short-term loan, to be repaid as soon as possible.

The next few months were a turmoil of activity. Richard criss-crossed the country. When he travelled to a major city, he went by plane. He stayed in the best hotels. Richard decided that 'prestige' would be the watchword of his business. Money well spent was money earned. That was his motto.

He followed this precept rigidly. If the airways were not suitable, he would take a train—but travel first-class. If necessary he would hire a taxi when too many connections were involved.

Richard's own instincts as a salesman were infallible when it came to appointing staff. He could sense the right qualities. Although he would have been hard put to it to express it in words, he knew exactly what to look for. Good salesmen had arrogant egotism, a sense of infallibility. Although they appeared to be humble and eager to please, they were conceited and confident of their superiority.

Richard's empire was instantly successful. The product was good and the financial rewards high. His sales team were professionals. The public purchased and the parent company were content. Money flowed toward Richard like oil from a newly tapped gusher. He and Betty could afford whatever they desired. It was heady and delirious. It

seemed as though nothing could spoil their future happiness.

Six months after the granting of the franchise, Betty sat at her writing desk. Her face was white and her Italian temper was black. She had been making a routine check on the monthly accounts and had begun to total Richard's cheque book. She held in her hand a cheque stub for £200, payable to a West End jeweller's. Richard had pencilled across it: 'Pendant for Kay'.

Richard was buying jewellery for another woman! Betty could not bring herself to believe it but her instinct told her it was true. She sat, remembering all the clues she had chosen to ignore but which now added up to infidelity.

When they were first married Richard had been a passionate lover. In fact his demands had almost been too much. It seemed that he wanted to devour her, physically and mentally.

But as the months went by his passion subsided. For a long time he had been a sometime lover, and then only when she virtually insisted.

When Richard began to travel she noticed the first signs. Shirts smudged with lipstick. Traces of perfume on his jackets. Sometimes, strange bruises on his body, but she had never commented.

Betty had a horror of being a jealous wife. The pettiness of accusation appalled her. But now she was confronted with evidence that her husband *was* 'playing around' and spending a lot of money in the process. She couldn't ignore the situation any longer. She sat, pensive. She would confront Richard, but she would do it *her* way.

That night Betty phoned Richard and told him to make other arrangements and to be home at a specified time. She fussed and pampered him, and poured his favourite wine. The meal was an enormous success. When it was over, Richard was relaxing in his favourite chair, she brought out the incriminating cheque. She dropped it in his lap with a flourish.

"Darling, could you tell me what that is?"

Richard glanced at the cheque and instantly his face changed. He gave a guilty look and cleared his throat.

"Er . . . What is this for again?" he said, peering at it as though he'd never seen it.

Watching him, Betty felt her mood change. Before, she'd felt betrayed, let down. Now, as she looked at Richard, his fair hair falling over his forehead, so transparently guilty and helpless, she felt only a maternal concern. Richard is such a child, she thought. And he's exceptionally attractive. She could hardly blame other women for fancying him.

"As far as I can remember this was a reward—you know, an inducement—for one of our salesladies." He looked embarrassed and held the cheque out to Betty. She took it from him wordlessly. Then, surprising even herself, her temper exploded.

"What do you take me for?" she shouted, crumpling the cheque into a ball and throwing it at Richard. "A moron? You might at least have the decency to be discreet about your affairs. Wasting £200 on a pendant? She must be very high-class!"

She continued to tongue-lash Richard for nearly ten minutes, throwing every remembered hint of infidelity at him. Gradually her rage and indignation subsided.

Through it all, Richard sat hang-dog, sometimes unconsciously taking the sting out of her venom by nodding in agreement as she berated him.

When Betty eventually stopped shouting, Richard slowly raised his head and looked at her pathetically.

"I don't know what to say. But I do know I love you. The other girls didn't mean anything. Women seem to find me attractive. And I don't like to hurt their feelings."

Betty felt like screaming: What about *my* feelings?

But instead of shouting at him, she quietly went to him and held his face in her hands.

"You're impossible, Richard. What am I going to do with you?"

He bowed his head and Betty heard his muffled voice: "Forgive me. I won't do it again."

Betty tenderly went on her knees next to him and they embraced. Then she led him into the bedroom and they made love.

Richard was safe again.

"It can't be as bad as you make it out to be Frank," argued Richard, looking hopefully across the desk to his accountant, James Hamer.

Hamer waved his hands in a gesture of impatience.

"Look, Richard, I'm not playing games. I've told you the exact position. I haven't embellished or understated. For the past four years you have been walking a tightrope with the Inland Revenue. You didn't take my advice and make any arrangements for your tax obligations. Now, finally, they want their money, £5,000. If you don't pay, they'll sell you up. This is the end of the road."

"But I don't have £5,000," said Richard helplessly.

"You'll have to find it somewhere," said James, "or they'll make you bankrupt."

Richard watched Betty's face intently. He had just told her of their financial crisis. Betty was speechless. Eventually she found her tongue.

"But . . . you told me you were making provisions for your tax in a special account . . ." She shook her head slowly at the enormity of his deception.

"I wasn't lying to you, Betty," he said. "I really did mean to open the account. But . . . I never got around to it."

"Oh my God," said Betty. "How can we possibly raise £5,000 at such short notice? What are we going to do?"

"I don't know," said Richard.

"It's no good sitting around and crying about it, we've got to do something," said Betty as she went to the writing desk for some paper and a pencil. Feverishly she began to calculate. When she had filled two foolscap pages she said: "We can do it, Richard. It'll mean tightening our

belts and changing our standard of living, but we can do it."

She explained to him that if they moved to a smaller house, sold their cars, jewellery and Richard's cameras and other equipment, they could make the immediate cash payment of £5,000 and cover the instalments demanded by the tax authorities.

Richard sat contemplating the change in their way of life which Betty's plan envisaged. He could not do it. Why should he go down in the world to such an extent?

He would ask his mother for help. After all, it was a reasonable request. And he could always pay the money back once the crisis was over.

"I'll ask mother to help," he told Betty. "Let's not even think about emergency measures until I've spoken to her."

Betty agreed. After all, Isabel was his mother and she had always helped him in the past.

"What do you mean, you can't?" said Richard, staring at Isabel in utter astonishment.

"What I say, Richard. I don't have £5,000 so I cannot give you £5,000."

"A loan, mother, I want a loan, not a gift."

"Gift or loan, it doesn't matter because I don't have the money."

Richard flushed with rage and he slammed his fist on the table between them.

"I *want* it, I want it, and I want it now! Do you understand?"

Isabel, watching her son's fit of temper, had the absurd feeling that he was going to stamp his foot.

"There's no point in raving, Richard. You've had more than your share of my money in the past. You haven't even tried to repay the £2,000 I lent you to get your business started, and that was quite a number of years ago. That reminds me," said Isabel, reaching for her diary, "it'll be your birthday soon. How old will you be?"

"Thirty," said Richard sulkily.

Isabel calmly paged through her diary: "I have kept a record of the money I have given you from the time you were eighteen. Would you like me to remind you?"

Without waiting for his reply she began to read: "£1,000, for the weekly dance, £500, £250, £200 . . ."

The list went on and on.

Richard, out of control, wrenched the diary from his mother and threw it across the room.

"I'm not interested in the money I've had in the past! Don't you understand I need £5,000 *now*, or I'll be ruined!"

"Over the years you've bled me," said Isabel. Her voice matter-of-fact, without reproof. "I'm not complaining. After all, you're my son. But there's no money left. I have only enough to live on until I die. When that day comes, you'll be welcome to what's left."

"What good will it be to me then?" Richard glared at his mother with petulant emotion. Isabel recoiled, startled by the hatred she saw in his eyes.

"The only time in my life I really need you, and you let me down!"

He paused, his voice lowered: "I'll never speak to you again."

Richard turned and strode out of the room. Isabel heard the front door slam. She sat unmoving, for a very long time.

Richard rushed out of the bank and looked about him desperately. Finding his bearings he headed for a hotel diagonally opposite. He walked recklessly through the traffic, went into the bar and ordered a whisky.

His hands were trembling and there was a film of perspiration on his forehead. With his handkerchief he wiped his brow. He'd never been spoken to in such a fashion in his life. His face quivered with nervous rage.

Incredibly, Richard wanted to cry. If he had been on his own he knew he would have broken down and wept. He lifted his glass and drank. The neat whisky made him catch his breath.

The bank manager, a man he'd always thought of as a friend, refused Richard's plea for help.

"I've looked over your account very carefully Mr Scott," he said. "For a number of years you have managed a most successful business. And yet you have absolutely nothing to show for it. As fast as the money came in, which was very fast indeed, you squandered it. You are lucky that you don't have to answer to shareholders. I'm afraid on your banking history I cannot possibly advance you money without security." The bank manager paused, as if to add weight to his words. "You have shown yourself to be irresponsible, Mr Scott. It is not this bank's policy to encourage total extravagance."

The words cut deeply into Richard. He was unable to think of a reply. He backed to the door and retreated from the bank manager's office.

Now he would have to go home and tell Betty. He ordered another whisky—a double.

Betty arranged the sale of their valuables and the house. Richard refused to help her in any way. Material possessions did not mean a great deal to Betty and she was not unduly upset by having to part with them. But to Richard the forced sale of his cameras and other possessions was as cathartic as losing a limb.

Betty soon found a modest apartment and she made it as comfortable as she could.

"It's not the end of the world," she said to Richard. "We're healthy, and the business is still doing well. In a year's time we'll be right back where we were again."

But nothing could lift Richard from his gloom. More and more he would stay at home. Betty would phone the office and feign illness on his behalf. Richard stopped bothering about the spot checks on the business he used to make in other parts of the country. When salesmen did not meet their quotas he ignored it. His old enthusiasm was completely gone and there was no way to pep up his staff.

Sales figures dropped. Richard's income became less

and less. One day he received an envelope with an American post mark. The letter briefly said that the parent company had decided to revoke his franchise in view of his disastrous trading figures.

That night Richard came home drunk, and brought a woman with him. She was a pretty young blonde with a vacant expression. She also had had too much to drink.

"Betty, I want you to meet Priscilla," he said. "Priscilla is a friend and I love her." He and the blonde giggled.

Betty looked from her husband to the empty face of the girl. This unbelievable charade astonished her, but she knew enough about Richard to realise that there must be a disaster behind his behaviour. Every time there was a crisis, Richard went off the rails. She was torn between anger and concern. She decided to be patient and try and find out what had happened.

Richard poured drinks. He did not offer one to Betty who sat quietly, controlling her anger. He seemed to be deliberately flaunting this empty-headed little blonde in front of her.

Since his tax trouble, Richard had shown no interest in sex. Nothing aroused him. Now here he was flaunting a complete stranger in front of his wife.

Richard looked at Betty, and she saw that his eyes were out of focus. He must have been drinking all evening. Normally he had a good head for liquor.

"You use the spare room tonight, Betty," he grinned. "Priscilla and I will occupy the bedroom." He leaned across to the blonde and kissed her. She put her arms around his neck.

This was too much for Betty. She leaped forward, grabbed the blonde by the shoulders and hauled her to her feet.

"Get out of here!"

She forced the drunken girl toward the door, opened it and pushed her into the corridor. Betty slammed the door and turned on her husband.

"And as for you...You bring a cheap slut like that

home, and expect me to let you take her to bed. Have you lost your mind?"

Richard stood and poured himself another drink.

"I don't care what you think," he said. "I love Priscilla." He turned and looked at Betty spitefully. "You're no good in bed. *You* should take lessons from Priscilla. She *really* knows how to make love."

He contemptuously turned his back and concentrated on his drink.

Betty began to cry. Her grief was a bewildering mixture of rage and humiliation. What was happening? Why was Richard behaving like this?

Three months later Richard left the car display showroom where he now worked, and headed for the nearby pub. He had just sold a car and he felt cheerful.

As he passed a shop window his attention was caught by a mechanical Santa Claus. He went inside and examined it. It had a hidden battery and if it was held in the palm of the hand an electrical contact was activated which made the head roll from side to side. It was a simple gimmick, but it appealed to Richard, who bought it.

When he reached the pub a few of his new friends greeted him warmly. Richard had been a car salesman for two months. He'd cut himself off from his own friends, sometimes being downright rude in order to avoid them. He had turned his back on the past and did not wish to be reminded of it.

He'd made plenty of friends since he began to frequent this pub. They were all cheerful, undemanding and friendly.

He took out the Santa Claus figure and showed it around. Then he propped it on his palm and the head began to move.

Irene Collison, a young typist Richard had recently met, laughed.

"Isn't that cute?" she said.

Richard felt pleased that she was amused. Irene took out a cigarette and Richard plunged his hand into his

pocket for his gold cigarette case and Dunhill lighter. They were the only valuables he'd salvaged from the crash.

"Have one of these instead," he said.

"Oh, all right. Thanks." She took a cigarette, then noticed the case.

"That's beautiful," she said. "May I look at it?"

"Of course," said Richard, and handed it to her.

She turned it and saw the inscription on the inside. She read: "To a long and lasting friendship, O.W." Irene looked impressed. "Who is O.W.?" she asked. The group at the bar were clustered around, curious about the expensive case.

Richard smiled modestly. "Orson Welles," he replied.

One of the drinkers gave a whistle of astonishment.

"Orson *Welles*?" said Irene, her mouth open.

"Yes. I did him a favour once. He's a decent chap, so he gave me this in appreciation."

"D'you see much of him?" asked Irene.

"Occasionally," said Richard casually. 'He gives me a ring when he's in town. But he travels a lot, you know."

Somebody offered him a drink and the conversation took on new life. The glamour of Orson Welles had rubbed off on to Richard Scott.

Later that evening Irene held Richard's hand and pulled him close.

"Why don't we go back to my place?" She squeezed his arm.

"Better idea. We'll go to *my* place, instead," he said.

"All right," said Irene. She was still holding his hand. She glanced down and noticed Richard's fingernails. Richard followed her gaze and felt embarrassment.

"It's being in that damned showroom," he apologised lamely. "My nails get filthy. Excuse me." He went to the men's room and washed his hands thoroughly.

When Richard took Irene home, Betty wasn't there. After he and Irene had a few more drinks they both became sexually aroused. He undressed her in the lounge

and they went into the bedroom. Afterwards they fell asleep.

Betty had been at work but that evening she came home late. She had called to see the family doctor about Richard's recent behaviour, about his drinking, his insulting behaviour and his deliberate flaunting of other women. The doctor said Richard obviously needed help. Betty was trying to think of a way to approach Richard without sending him into one of his childish rages.

She opened the door with her key, went inside and closed it, leaning back for a moment. She felt exhausted.

I'm not used to hard work after a life of luxury, she thought wryly.

Suddenly Betty became aware of the feminine clothing lying on the floor. Not again! she thought fiercely. She went to the bedroom and pushed open the door. Richard was in bed and a woman's arm was draped around his neck. Betty became hysterical. She ran into the bedroom and seized one of the pillows, began to hit the sleeping girl.

"Get out!" she screamed, again and again. "Get out! Get out!"

The girl woke, looking about her in bewilderment. She also began to scream. Richard's features were heavy with sleep and alcohol. "What's happening?" he said.

Irene leaped out of bed and ran into the lounge, picking up her clothes.

"Stay away from my husband," shouted Betty, and took another swipe at Irene with the pillow.

"*Your husband*!" said Irene. "Oh my God." She struggled into her clothes and escaped through the door.

Betty went back into the bedroom. She'd behaved badly but she didn't care. Richard lay in bed. His eyes were bloodshot. He looked pathetic.

My husband, she thought sadly.

"I'm going to leave you, Richard," she said.

Richard's face showed alarm and fear. "You can't leave me! Please!" He struggled on to his knees, hampered by the bedclothes.

"Why do you want to leave me? You can't! *You can't!*"

"But I'm going to," said Betty sternly, wondering if she ever could.

CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS

Richard Scott's problems stemmed initially from his father.

Because of his father's insistence that Richard be brought up in a Spartan fashion, he was denied the normal accoutrements of childhood—toys and happy irresponsible hours of play. Richard's father was a martinet and forced him to follow a strict schedule, including daily inspections to make sure that he maintained a high standard of personal cleanliness. Although his father gave discipline, he did not give affection and love.

All children seek attention from their parents, and if they cannot receive love-attention, they will attempt to achieve attention in some other way. In Richard's case, he misappropriated money and played truant from church. He was deliberately naughty—to focus his father's angry attention upon him. When he was caned, in punishment, Richard felt content. His strategy had been successful.

At the same time Richard developed a deep resentment toward his cold, tyrannical father. Although he could never admit it to himself, Richard was secretly delighted when his father died and the stern influence was removed. He reacted against his father's previous disciplines. When his mother told him of his father's dying wish—that he succeed in his studies—he subconsciously planned to fail his examinations.

He also rebelled against his father by forgetting to clean his nails. Unless he was reminded that his nails needed cleaning he would ignore their lack of cleanliness.

Richard's life was turned topsy-turvy by his father's death. Instead of the strict, pseudo-military discipline he

was used to, he was now smothered by his doting mother's over-indulgence. His wish was her command. He could do no wrong. The discipline, inculcated in him by his father, was soon forgotten. But his father had been a key influence on Richard. By being excessively stern, yet at the same time withholding his affection, he had created in Richard a feeling of inadequacy, of being less than a person. In order to compensate, Richard had to masquerade as *more* than a person. He assumed a bluff, hearty confidence. Many thought him arrogant but he could not hide the 'little-boy' in his personality—this made him extremely attractive to women.

Richard's approach to his first business venture was typical of his immaturity. He was absurdly optimistic—the village dance would make him a *profit* of £125 a week. He knew that the figure of £125 a week was the maximum possible *takings*. Even Richard was aware that expenses would have to be subtracted. But he chose to eliminate reality from his thinking.

When he left home he carried on in the same vein, living well beyond his means, dreaming 'Walter Mitty' dreams about the money he would make—and running to mother for help whenever he was in trouble.

When he met his future wife, Betty, she accepted him at face value. He seemed rich and successful, able to offer the security she needed. At the same time Betty was tailor-made to meet Richard's emotional requirements. She was older than Richard, she was sensible and she was maternal. Richard didn't really want a wife, he wanted a mother. For that reason the girl he chose had to be a little older than he. Richard instinctively recognised Betty's maternal quality on the night he met her.

Throughout their later tempestuous married life Betty 'played her role' perfectly.

Before they married, Richard was sexually passionate and attentive. But once they were wed, he slowly transformed Betty into a mother rather than a wife and he paid her less and less sexual attention.

He became unfaithful, which he equated with being

'naughty'. Betty forgave him and stood by him... Precisely as a mother would treat a wayward child.

The luckiest day for Richard was when he met O.W. the American businessman. O.W. obviously like Richard and approved of him. Richard instantly turned O.W. into an ideal father figure. Father approved of him, so he would do his best to deserve and keep that approval. Richard worked conscientiously and the business did well.

Success enabled Richard to indulge himself. He started to enjoy the childhood he had never known. He bought himself innumerable toys—cameras, tape-recorders, cars.

He began to womanise more and more. But in order to reassure himself that his substitute mother (Betty) still loved him, he subconsciously arranged to be found out. That was why he left an obvious clue in his cheque book, with the information pencilled in. He *wished* to be caught.

True to form, Betty chastised him . . . which he accepted as just . . . then forgave him. She did exactly as Richard intended her to do.

But Richard's childishness inevitably created trouble. He ignored his tax responsibilities and was faced with disaster.

As usual, in a time of crisis, Richard went to his mother. But he had sapped her financial resources over the years. He always insisted it was merely a loan, but he never repaid the money. When his mother could not help him, and told him why, he turned on her in childish spiteful frustration.

The one person he thought infallible had let him down. Although Richard hated his mother for this, he still felt guilt towards her and therefore could not be actively vicious. He turned, instead, towards his substitute mother . . . Betty. He flaunted his affairs in order to humiliate *her*.

The other crushing blow was provided by the bank manager, another father figure. When this 'father' brutally criticised him, Richard went to pieces and neglected his work. His business disintegrated, then father-figure O.W. coldly expressed his disapproval by withdrawing the franchise.

Richard had surrounded himself with father-figures and mother-figures. When they all failed him, he was forced to realise that they were not real parents and became emotionally destroyed.

When he was forced to live humbly, as a car salesman, Richard was still a 'baby-man'.

He was fascinated by 'toys'. He bought the mechanical Santa Claus and showed it to his friends in the pub. Their attention elevated himself in his own eyes. In a childish bid to gain more esteem, he lied about the initials on his cigarette case, substituting Orson Welles for Osgood Williams.

He took Irene home to humiliate his wife, in the secret hope that Betty (his 'slave-mother') would forgive him once again.

It was Betty who came to see me. She wanted advice. Should she stay with Richard, or leave him?

She said she was at her wits' end and that Richard was behaving exactly like a child.

I explained to her that that's what Richard was—a child, an immature person. Betty was caught in a vicious chain. Richard considered her as a mother-figure and was compelled to go on testing her. He would behave badly, she would forgive him and this would 'prove' her love.

But as I explained to Betty, the more love she gave Richard, the worse would be his behaviour. The only way to regulate him was to exert a stern maternal attitude and chastise him all the time. If she relaxed this discipline, Richard would break out and re-enact the delights of his father's death when the stern routines forced on him were no longer present.

I told Betty it was not she I should be seeing, but her husband.

She spoke to Richard, and he agreed to visit me. But I soon realised that his attitude was typical of his childish personality. Visiting me was, in his mind, akin to being given a toy. It was a new experience. He expected me to

snap my fingers and hypnotise him into being an entirely new personality, according to *his* exact specifications.

When I told him this was impossible, he showed condescending contempt to me and an 'I told you so' attitude towards Betty. He could see no reason why he should waste his time on treatment so patently absurd.

Obviously Richard did not *want* to change. He was happy as he was. His parents had never given him a childhood and, being conscious of this deprivation, he spent the rest of his life in pursuit of the childhood he never had. Consequently, he became trapped in his immaturity.

That was the only time I saw Richard and I was conscious that another 'baby-man' was on the loose, creating havoc and misery in society.

5: The Thirty-Year Itch

James Norton parked the car. He had a few minutes to wait before his daughter's ballet class was over. He lit a cigarette and inhaled deeply.

He thought: Who would have believed it? A hard-living bachelor like me! Look at me now! Thirty-eight years old, the original proud father and loving husband. He chuckled to himself.

Since that memorable evening when he met Ivy his life had indeed changed—and for the better. Ivy was the kind of wife he had always dreamed of in those moments when confirmed bachelors contemplate the possibilities of marriage. She was sweet, sexy, useful about the house, ten years younger than he and intelligent. What's more, she had given him a beautiful daughter, Susan.

Norton saw Susan emerge from the hall, a pert little seven-year-old with her hair in a pigtail, carrying a miniature vanity case.

As soon as she saw him she leaped into his arms. He kissed her and lifted her on to the car seat beside him. As they drove he encouraged her to tell him everything that had happened to her that day. She prattled all the way home, a vivacious child with big brown eyes and a quick smile. He turned into the driveway and as he brought the car to a halt Jim noticed that Susan was studying him very seriously. He paused, his hand on the car door.

"Daddy," she said with naïve gravity, "do you love me?"

Norton was almost overcome by the simple question.

"Really, Susan, you'll be the death of me," he said, in mock alarm. "What a question to ask your father! Of course I love you!" He pulled her to him and held her in his arms. "I love you more than anything in the world You and your mother. I love you both."

The little girl's eyes softened. She threw her arms around his neck and hugged him.

James Norton knew that children went through different phases, and emotional insecurity was one. He knew that it was not unusual for youngsters to seek reassurance. But Susan had never asked him that question before.

"Why, darling?" he said. "What made you think that I might not love you?"

"Cindy said at the ballet class that her Daddy hated her and hated her Mummy too. She said he never ever wanted to see them again."

"The poor child," said Norton. He patted his daughter affectionately. "Well, I certainly love both you and Mummy so don't you ever worry about that again."

He looked at her seriously: "And don't forget you have to love me too!"

"I love you," she said simply.

The day after Susan's sixteenth birthday party, James Norton, Ivy and Susan were at dinner, having a hilarious post-mortem on the previous night.

"And did you see Hilary?" said Susan. "She was trying so hard to be dignified. I wanted to trip her up just to bring her down to earth."

Susan began to impersonate her guests. She was a natural mimic with an uncanny ear for voice inflexions and facial expressions.

Jim and Ivy laughed so much that their eyes streamed with tears. "Please, darling," said Norton, "I'll do myself an injury if you don't stop."

"Susan," said Ivy. "You haven't opened all your birthday presents yet."

Susan scooted upstairs and a little while later pirouetted down the stairs in the white bikini her father had given her.

She ran to him, kissed him and put her arm around his neck.

"Daddy, it's just too marvellous," she said. She smiled

at him. "You know all my secrets, don't you, just how I tick and what pleases me. I think I'll have you officially named 'The Most Wonderful Father in the World'." She kissed him again.

"I'm going for a swim," she shouted, and ran out into the garden. They heard the splash as she dived in the pool. It was a warm summer's night.

James Norton felt emotion as strong as he had ever experienced. She was a beautiful child, with a face like an angel and a perfect figure. And she had a disposition to match. His mood touched his face and his eyes moistened.

Ivy's hand was on his arm. "What is it, Jim?" she said softly.

He looked at her and grinned.

"It's nothing. Elderly fathers are always smitten by their daughters," he said.

"You're deservedly proud." Ivy grinned her elfin grin. "And so am I!"

They sat silently for a moment, parents thinking of their daughter.

"She has some serious moments, you know, Jim," said Ivy.

"Yes. Underneath the clown she's a deep person."

"She was upset before the party, about the death of Lionel Simpson."

"She didn't mention it to me," said Norton.

"I told her he'd been seriously ill for a long time. She thought he just died suddenly." She paused. "What really upset her was that Lionel was only forty-eight."

"But why . . .?" said Norton, bewildered.

"Don't you see," said Ivy gently. "That's your age."

"So it is," said Jim. "I'm inclined to forget how old I am," he said lightly.

"Susan's terrified of death," continued Ivy. "But I suppose it's only natural. Death in the neighbourhood brings it home that we all have to die. And she *does* adore you outrageously, Jim."

They heard Susan approaching from the pool. She was

whistling loudly out of tune. She burst into the room, pushing her stomach out and clutching it with both hands. "Well, now," she said with gravity. "I have something to confess to you . . ." She exploded into laughter.

"You're getting the whole place wet," said Ivy laughing. "Disappear!"

One year later Susan was dancing cheek to cheek with Daniel Malloy when she felt a touch on her sleeve.

"Are you Miss Norton?"

"Yes," she said.

"There's a message asking you to return home immediately."

"Why? What's wrong?" said Susan, alarmed.

"Illness, I believe."

Daniel raced her home in his car. She was out of the door before the vehicle came to a halt.

Dashing through the front door, she saw her mother weeping, head in hands, on the couch.

"Your father's dead," said Ivy, through her tears.

"What happened?" asked Susan, fighting back her own shock.

"He just declined and died," said Ivy. She encircled her daughter in her arms. "It comes to us all," she said, patting Susan as she broke into convulsive sobs.

Four months later Ivy heard an urgent cry from her daughter's room. It was early morning.

"Mother!" cried Susan. "Please come here!"

"What is it, darling? Is something wrong?"

Wordlessly, Susan pulled up her nightgown to bare her upper thigh. It was covered by a dark, scaly eruption. It was suppurating slightly, and Ivy saw a trickle of blood. Involuntarily she put her hands to her mouth in shock. "You poor child!" she said.

Susan looked at her with appealing eyes. "What is it, mother?" She stared down at the great blotch on her leg, her face contorted with revulsion and fear, "It looks . . . like leprosy."

"I don't know what it is, darling," said Ivy, kneeling by her daughter's bedside. "We'll have to find out." She inspected it closely. "Is it painful?"

"No," said Susan, "but it itches."

"But when did you first . . . catch it?"

"It was there when I woke up this morning. There was nothing there last night when I went to bed. Nothing," said Susan, a note of hysteria entering her voice. "I've never had anything like this before! What is it? I've never heard of a disease like this." Susan flung herself on her bed, crying pitiably.

Ivy phoned the family doctor. He came over at once. He glanced at Susan's leg and put his hand on her shoulder. "It's psoriasis," he announced. "Don't worry about it. You're not going to die. You won't even have to stay in bed. It's the most prevalent of skin diseases."

Ivy was amazed. "But how can that be, Doctor? If it's the most common skin disease, why have neither of us ever heard of it?"

"People always keep it covered," said the doctor simply.

He explained: "Psoriasis can attack any part of the body. It itches, bleeds, suppurates, and it's irritating. It can be painful too."

He paused. "I must confess that medical science has no explanation, yet. There is no positive cure. There are a variety of palliative measures. Sometimes they ease the irritation. But the truth is that we do not know where psoriasis comes from or how to treat it. I'm afraid, Susan, you'll have to learn to live with it."

"I can't wear a bikini any more," said Susan, regarding the blotch with distaste.

"That's up to you," said the doctor. "It is advisable not to show the manifestation too openly because the public are inclined to jump to the wrong conclusions about psoriasis. You see, although it looks unpleasant, it's not contagious."

He applied some medicament to the sore. "That should help to ease the irritation."

As he packed his bag, the doctor smiled at Susan.

"Psoriasis is a mysterious affliction," he said. "Yours appeared from nowhere, overnight. You never know, it might be gone tomorrow."

Susan's psoriasis did not disappear. It spread to virtually every part of her body. Susan never wore a bikini again. The disease spread so swiftly that within a month she was unable to wear short sleeves. She covered herself from the neck to well below her knees. As a result Susan's personality underwent a radical change. She had been a happy girl, full of fun, fond of company and envied for her beauty. Now she withdrew into herself. Medical treatment did nothing to improve her physical condition. Susan resigned herself to a solitary existence.

She explained to her mother: "I just can't face the thought of marriage while I'm like this." She shuddered. "No man would ever want to touch . . . this." She gestured at her arms, running with scaly sores.

Ivy was at a loss for words. Her daughter's logic was irrefutable.

"It's unjust," said Ivy.

"But it's fact," said Susan.

"What do you plan to do?"

"Cynthia had a good idea," said Susan. "She suggested I should be a nurse. I've always been interested in nursing."

"And you'd be able to stay in touch with any new developments," said Ivy, clutching at straws. "Anything's possible these days. They may come up with a wonder drug which will cure it on the spot."

"Let's hope so," said Susan, with a resigned smile.

As the years passed, Susan's nursing career flourished. Because she refused to allow herself romantic interests her devotion to duty was single-minded. The psoriasis remained. The disease would moderate slightly for a while, then occur with renewed intensity. It attacked both legs, both arms and her torso. Fortunately, it never erupted on Susan's face.

To others, Susan was a beautiful woman who inexpli-

cably, led the life of a recluse. She had only two contacts—her mother, whom she visited at every opportunity, and her friend from schooldays, Cynthia.

When she reached middle age Susan became the matron of a hospital. She was esteemed by her colleagues and to casual observers lived a full, useful and active life. After seven years as a matron Susan applied for three months' leave. She explained that her mother was seventy-two and in extremely poor health. She would like to spend all her time with her until the end.

When Susan arrived home she parked her car and went inside. There was no sign of her mother.

"Ma, where are you?" she called.

"Is that you, Susan?" shouted her mother, appearing from the garden, a trowel in her hand. She was a trifle stooped and her hair was grey. Otherwise she was the personification of health.

"This is a lovely surprise," said Ivy. "I didn't expect you until the weekend."

"I'm back for three months," said Susan.

"Three months!" Her mother was astonished.

"I've taken long leave," said Susan brushing the subject aside. "I'll just take my things upstairs, then I'll make tea."

"All right, dear," said Ivy, and seated herself in her favourite chair. As her daughter went upstairs she became thoughtful. Something was worrying Susan. Ivy wondered how long it would take her daughter to unburden herself.

Upstairs in her room, Susan locked the door and sat down. She clenched and unclenched her hands. She could feel the palpitations of her heart. She held her hands upwards, resting on the dressing-table. Pools of moisture began to form in the hollows of her palms. This is fear, she thought. I'm terrified. The physical signs are there to prove it. The accelerated respiration, the sweat on my hands. But what am I afraid of? The cry in her mind was one of desperation. She had asked it of herself a thousand times. As she sat at her familiar table she was convinced

that something dreadful was about to happen to her.

But what?

Would lightning strike her dead? It was a cloudless day.

Would the floor split beneath her? Absurd.

Would she drop dead of a heart attack? She'd taken a complete physical only three months ago. A remarkably fit woman, the physician had said.

Susan looked in the mirror again. There were smudges under her eyes. Insomnia. She hadn't had a good night's sleep in months.

She was a matron—she knew her medicine.

A fixation of imminent doom. That was one of the medical clichés applied to the patients who arrived at the hospital with symptoms similar to hers. The familiarity of the affliction was of no comfort to Susan now that she suffered it herself. Hospital routine dictated that the patient would be given a range of tranquillisers. If these didn't help, and they mostly didn't, the next step could only be electric shock therapy, the treatment that some doctors still considered to be 'playing Russian roulette with the mind'.

Anxiety wracked Susan. She whimpered, and pathetic sounds escaped from her. She looked in the mirror. She was crouched in the foetal position, cowering from a nameless dread.

Discipline, she told herself. As a matron, she believed in discipline and enforced it diligently. Self-discipline and rational thought would save her. She stood, smoothed back her hair (she wore it in a severe style which set off her imperious good looks) and straightened her skirt. She forced herself downstairs. She and her mother sat together and discussed neighbourhood affairs.

Ivy put down her teacup. Although she was seventy-two, there was no tremble to her hand. "What is it, Susan?" she asked quietly. "You're so terribly nervous. Your hands are shaking all the time. And why have you taken three months' leave? It is not like you to abandon your job. What are you going to do with yourself for three months, sit here and drink tea with me?"

Ivy knew her daughter well. Even before she'd completed her carefully thought out statement, Susan was kneeling beside her, her head on her lap, a torrent of words pouring from her.

"I'm going mad," she said. "I'm so afraid, and I don't know what of. I'm anxious all the time. Something hideous and unspeakable is going to happen. It's terrible. I lie in bed at night, shaking and crying, and I can't sleep. I feel ridiculous. I'm in the medical profession. How can I approach a doctor and tell him I'm afraid but don't know what of?"

The gush of confusion over, Susan reverted to her pattern of self-control. She sat down, formal and severe. "I'm sorry," she said.

"Has it anything to do with the psoriasis?" asked her mother, more concerned about her daughter's welfare than ever, but instinctively remaining calm.

"It's the same as always," said Susan. "It comes and goes." She began to pace the room, back and forth, back and forth, rubbing her hands together.

Her mother watched. She could feel anxiety and tension emanating from her daughter, tangible as shrieks of anguish.

Ivy crossed to where her daughter was so nervously moving. "Come here," she said softly, and brought her daughter's head to her shoulder. "It'll be all right. There, there," she said, crooning the words as if for a child. The grey-headed woman being cradled so tenderly began to cry, the unaccustomed tears accompanied by discordant sounds.

"God help me," she cried, "Oh God help me . . ."

CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS

Psoriasis is psychosomatic in origin. It is a form of self-punishment for real or imagined guilt, and it is frequently associated with death.

The disease affects all ages from the young to the extremely aged. But, because of its association with death of

parents, a great number of cases occur among teenagers or young adults.

Susan Norton came to my clinic in despair. She had reached a crisis point and she desperately needed help. She had no clues to offer that would assist a solution to her problem. She had suffered from psoriasis all of her adult life. Now she had developed an anxiety neurosis.

We had many discussions, during which I questioned her closely about the circumstances of her father's death. Nothing emerged which gave any hint of the truth, but I was convinced that the key to Susan's enigma would be found at that time.

We decided to use hypnosis to regress Susan to her teenage years.

It is always fascinating to see people re-live their lives as they travel back in time.

In deep hypnosis, Susan was able to recall the true circumstances of her father's death. They were not as she had told them to me consciously. Her mind had 'censored' the episode and erased everything it did not wish to remember.

The true happenings of the night of James Norton's death were as follows:

Daniel Malloy came to the Norton home to collect Susan to take her dancing. He and Susan sat in the lounge and had cocktails with Susan's parents. They were talking and laughing. James Norton rose from his chair to pour another drink. He staggered, went pale, and collapsed on the carpet. Ivy Norton immediately telephoned the doctor. They made Susan's father comfortable in a chair and loosened his tie. He complained of a tightness in his chest.

The doctor arrived within minutes, examined Norton and diagnosed the possibility of a mild coronary. He recommended hospital as soon as possible for tests. Norton seemed to recover, colour came back to his cheeks and he began to joke about his illness. The doctor ordered him to stay in bed.

Susan, Ivy Norton and Daniel Malloy gathered at Norton's bedside.

"I'm going to stay with you until you're all right," said Susan firmly.

"Nonsense, darling," said Norton. His voice was weak but otherwise he seemed normal. "I refuse to be a wet blanket. You'll just make me feel worse, sitting here and worrying. You and Dan go to the dance and enjoy yourselves."

Finally, Susan agreed. She and Dan went to the dance. Midway through the evening Sue received the message to return home. She did so and found that her father had suffered another heart attack, a much more serious one, and had died.

Under hypnosis, a subject has total recall. The subconscious mind is like a movie-camera which never stops turning, photographing and retaining everything it sees in detail. Susan remembered the exact exchange of dialogue and re-lived her distress of that night.

As I watched she began to moan. She was in her room, after having come home all those years before. Her words were said so quietly I could just hear them. Susan was talking to herself, at the age of seventeen, blaming herself for her father's death. Instead of staying with him, she had gone to enjoy herself. While her father was dying painfully, she was laughing and dancing. Guilt crushed her. Irrationally, she believed that by staying by his side she might have staved off the inevitable.

I heard the words coming softly from her lips: "He told me I'd be the death of him. I'd be the death of him." She repeated the phrase again and again.

This was unexpected. Under questioning, Susan revealed that her father had said this when she was seven, after she had asked him whether he loved her. Young children do not always understand allusive, figurative phrases such as "You'll be the death of me!" They sometimes take them literally. In Susan's case the expression obviously worried her.

Further questioning uncovered another link in the chain—Susan's shocked discovery that a neighbour had died suddenly at the same age as her father. "You'll be

the death of me!" plus an awareness and fear of death, were linked in Susan's mind and associated with her father.

The stage was now set for tragedy—the death of her father in circumstances which caused Susan to feel intense guilt.

Psoriasis erupted four months later and stayed with Susan for thirty years.

I was satisfied that we had uncovered the cause of Susan's psoriasis. It was a classic example of guilt associated with parental death, complicated by an unfortunate choice of phraseology at a formative stage of the child's life.

We still had to discover the reason for the onset of anxiety.

I asked Susan if she could recall when the anxiety started. She could. It came unexpectedly at bedtime after celebrating her birthday.

"Which birthday?" I asked.

"This year, a little over two months ago."

"How old were you on that day?"

"Forty-nine," said Susan.

I did some mental arithmetic.

"How old was your father when he died?"

Susan looked vague. "I don't really remember."

"Yes you do," I said. "On your sixteenth birthday a neighbour died. He was the same age as your father forty-eight. Your father died one year later. He was forty-nine. The same age as you are now."

Susan was suffering from a fear of death, triggered by her subconscious awareness of the passage of time. Her father died at the age of forty-nine. Now she was forty-nine.

When a child thinks of its parents, it does not think in terms of age—it is merely aware that the parent is much older than itself. When a parent dies, the child does not think: My father has died at the age of forty-nine, only: my father has died.

But, *subconsciously*, the child *knows* the age.

Children look upon their parents as gods, all-knowing

and infallible beings. This is natural as the child has no experience from which it can draw to make comparative judgments. Between Susan and her father, the normal daughter-father bond was deepened by an exceptional degree of love and affection. Susan's subconscious rationale was: My father could only live until he was forty-nine. He was a better person than me. I shoulder responsibility for his death. It would not be fair if I lived longer than he did. My death must be imminent. From then, Susan Norton was expecting retribution from an unknown source. She felt she deserved to die.

Of course, nothing happened. Life went on.

Susan gained partial relief as a result of our investigations.

Because she was able to re-experience the circumstances of her father's death, and emotionalise her guilt, the psoriasis which had plagued her for so long, disappeared.

As to her anxiety state, Susan logically accepted the situation. But an intellectual awareness is not the same as an emotional purge, and we had many slogging discussions during which I drummed into her that her fear of death was irrational. Every time she came for a visit I would point out that she was still alive and would be next time. Again and again we covered the same ground. Susan's anxiety state lessened but did not disappear.

So, at the age of forty-nine, Susan conquered psoriasis but it was a Phyrric victory. The disease had already ruined her prospects of a normal married life.

Her anxiety was controlled within manageable proportions and she was able to continue in her profession.

Susan's onset of anxiety, her fear of imminent doom, her conviction that something evil was about to happen—these are symptoms which occur frequently among people in their forties and fifties. It is astonishing that most hospitals continue to treat these unfortunate people on a physical level. Attempts are made to tranquillise them by chemical means. When these fail, they are given shock treatments.

I have dealt with many patients who have responded

more positively than Susan. This mental time link with parental death is widespread. It deserves wider recognition.

Psoriasis is a disorder with unusual aspects.

It is remarkable that though it is an exceedingly unpleasant ailment, some people who suffer from it become insecure at the thought that they might become cured. They are inclined to worry as to what life will be like without it—without the sympathy and attention it brings.

The pun syndrome, so common in phobias, also manifests itself in psoriasis.

A housewife consulted me because of an outbreak of psoriasis on the soles of her feet. It was painful and inconvenient. After lengthy treatment we found a literal interpretation of a hackneyed phrase. The patient had an unhappy domestic life. She came to the conclusion that she would have to leave her husband, though she had strong religious principles which forbade divorce. Her conscience intervened and a subconscious guilt asserted itself at the thought that she could even consider such a deed. She punished herself for having 'itchy feet'. Overnight, she truly had itchy feet. Suppressed guilt emerged as a punitive ailment.

6: The Non-Con-Man

Maurice Cane felt at one with the world. Doreen, his wife, always succeeded in presenting an appetising meal but today she had excelled herself. He glanced around the table. He felt a glow of good humour, only partly due to the enjoyment of his meal.

Doreen, attractive and trim, was the picture of a contented young mother. Next to her was their youngest child, Lilian, who was three, and on her left was Arnold, aged four. Doreen's sister, Eunice, and her husband had joined them for Sunday lunch. They too, thought Maurice, looked well fed and groomed. There's an atmosphere of success around this table. He looked at Basil, the eldest son, aged five. Basil was a presentable lad with sensitive features. Maurice felt a surge of fatherly affection and pride as he watched his boy.

He felt self-indulgent. I'm a lucky man. I own a large furniture store, I have a beautiful wife, three fine children, money in the bank, my own home, my business is flourishing and I'm only thirty-three years old.

He cast his memory back across the years. He and Doreen had met at school, and their romance had started at once. Somehow there had never been any question about their marriage. It was the most natural conclusion that they should spend their lives together.

He had taken over his father's small business and almost at once his ideas and confident approach had transformed the enterprise. He bought out opposition stores and expanded into neighbouring towns. Even now he had a plan of expansion on a grand scale covering the next ten years, based on his anticipation of the growth rate in his part of the country.

Cane and Company, he thought, are a force to be reckoned with, and we'll become even more important as

the years go by. He looked at Basil again. And it's all for you. Basil is the heir apparent, he thought half-facetiously.

Parental responsibility has many facets. On one hand it was his duty to be successful and ensure his children's security. Even his severest critics would admit that in this respect he was completely fulfilling his fatherly obligations. On the other hand, it was also his responsibility to see that Basil would be prepared to take over from his father if and when the need arose.

Maurice had already put Basil's name on the list for eventual admission to a 'good' school (although it did not have the ultimate cachet of social distinction, it was the best possible boarding school which accepted Jews).

As Maurice thought of the vagaries of life, of the simple physical hazards of daily existence, he experienced a feeling of protection toward his son. No harm must come to Basil. His whole life was ahead.

After lunch they went on to the patio for coffee. The children ran to play in the garden. Maurice was talking to his sister-in-law's husband. He glanced at the bottom of the garden and saw Basil clambering up a pile of bricks. On the left was John, their neighbour's son, walking along the wall, arms held out to balance himself.

Maurice ran the length of the garden and grabbed his son just as his hands were reaching for the top of the six-foot wall.

"What do you think you're doing?" he cried, breathless after his unaccustomed exertion.

Basil looked at him with surprise.

"I was going to walk along the wall, like John," he said.

"If I ever catch you trying to do such a stupid thing again you'll be sorry," said his father fiercely. "It's all very well for ragamuffins like John to go clambering along walls like a monkey. But no son of mine is going to take such stupid risks."

He put Basil on the ground, and gestured towards the wall above them.

"Just look at that," he said. "Imagine you were stand-

ing up there and you had a dizzy spell, or there was a sudden gust of wind—anything like that. You could have fallen and injured yourself. At the very least you'd break an arm. It's foolish to expose yourself to that kind of injury."

Basil looked at his father in amazement. He couldn't recall ever seeing his Dad so agitated.

"But, Daddy," he said, "John walks on the wall every day. Nothing ever happens to him."

"Who cares about John," answered his father. "I care about you. Don't ever walk on that wall again. And that's the end of it."

They walked back to the house, where the family ribbed Maurice about his hundred-yard sprint. Later, when their guests had gone, Maurice told Doreen to keep a sharp eye on Basil in the future.

A few weeks later Basil was pedalling his tricycle in the park when he heard an excited shout. "Hey, Basil, Look here!" It was Mike . . . riding a brand-new bicycle.

"What do you think?" asked Mike. Basil admired the shiny new machine, its widespread handlebars and its big wheels. Mike seemed to fly around the playground in a blur of speed.

"My Dad bought it for me," said Mike proudly, stopping so that Basil and the other children could admire it. Another little boy chipped in: "I'm getting my own bike too, at the end of the month, Dad promised."

Basil looked at his tricycle. He'd been having a fine time on it but now it seemed unexciting. It's a baby bike, he thought.

Basil dashed home earlier than usual and was waiting when his father arrived from the store. He told his father the exciting news about Mike's bicycle. "Please, Daddy, can I have one too?"

"Certainly not," said his father. "They're far too dangerous. It just needs one lunatic in a car and that would be the end of you. All the time boys are falling off bicycles and killing themselves."

Basil felt bitterly disappointed. He couldn't understand. Why could the other boys have bikes? Why were *they* so different?

Next time Basil went to the park he took his tricycle but as soon as Mike appeared on his bike he felt ashamed. He never rode the tricycle again.

The next summer the Canes went on holiday to the seaside. They had a comfortable cottage and soon made friends with some of the other holidaymakers. One afternoon one of the parents decided to go horse-riding and offered to take Basil along with his own two boys for an outing on horseback. Basil was excited and ran to get his parents' permission.

"No," said his father. "You might be thrown. Horse-riding is very dangerous, especially for young children. I don't know how Mr Thomas could even suggest it."

Basil almost broke into tears with disappointment.

"Don't be so upset," said his mother. "We're going along the beach later. Come with us and we'll give you a ride on a donkey." Basil cheered up at the prospect.

Later, they found the man who hired donkeys for rides and Maurice picked his son up and put him in the saddle. The man tugged at the bridle and slowly the old donkey began to make its way along the beach. Basil looked around him. There was his father, strolling alongside. He had to be careful not to walk too fast or he would have left Basil and the donkey behind.

This isn't any fun, thought Basil. I'd much rather be galloping on a real horse. He felt useless thinking of the Thomas boys riding horses with their father. He slid off the donkey's back before it turned around to go back again.

Basil had a peculiar, fluttering sensation in his stomach. His eyes were burning. It was late. He'd been staring at his school books as though intensity of gaze could force knowledge into his brain. He relaxed in his chair for a moment. Tomorrow was his most important examination.

His school-leaving certificate. He'd swotted for weeks, and worked hard in school, yet somehow he had such a sense of despair that the prospect of writing the examination filled him with terror.

He thought: I'm going to disappoint them again. I know it. Why is it I can't do anything right?

Today had been another case in point, Basil had brought a schoolfriend home, a young man called Peter Donaldson. Basil liked him because of his cheerful confidence. He was a good sportsman and excellent scholar. Because he had all the attributes Basil wished for himself, he looked up to him.

His father was courteous and asked Peter about his family, whom he obviously knew. Later, after Peter had gone, his father took him aside for a 'little chat'.

"I've been worried for some time about your choice of friends," said his father, "This young chap Peter. I know his family."

"Oh, do you, Dad?" interjected Basil, "Peter's one of the prefects. Everyone likes him."

"Hmmm," said his father. "I don't doubt it. But they're a very poor family. I wish you'd be a bit more selective about the boys you make friends with. Peter's father is in debt up to here."

Basil was silent. He knew his father must be right and here was yet another example of how bad Basil's judgment was. How was he to know Peter was poor? You couldn't very well go to a boy and say: Has your father got a lot of money? before you decided whether you would like him or not.

He rubbed his eyes. He'd better go to bed or he'd be too tired to concentrate in the morning.

The next day, Basil sat in the examination hall, staring desperately at the sheet of paper in front of him. He held his forehead and closed his eyes in an effort to gather his thoughts. This question was the very one he had swotted the previous week. He had known it by heart. Why couldn't he recall any of it now? It was as though something had blockaded his mental storehouse which had been

stockpiled with facts during his long weeks of swotting. He picked up his pen, hoping that physical movement would trigger his memory. Nothing happened. His mind was a total blank. Basil felt his hand shaking. He began to feel ill.

What will my parents think? They are such marvellous parents and I keep on letting them down. He thought: I'm just not good enough. They deserve someone better than me. He bowed his head over his desk in shame.

When he left the examination hall an hour later, shoulders slumped, Basil saw himself reflected in a shop window. He stopped for a closer look. You even look like a failure, he thought bitterly, observing his stoop and his red-rimmed eyes. All the hard work, swotting night after night and for what? Nothing. When it came to it, my memory let me down. At that moment he remembered the answer to the question that had puzzled him for so long, and Basil felt a sick anger. He struck his fist against the window. A shopper inside looked at him, startled. Overcome with rage and embarrassment, Basil turned and hurried into the safety of the crowds along the pavement.

Basil didn't know what to do with his hands. He put them under the table on his knees, but decided that must look stiff and formal. He lifted them and let them fall on the table. Cheryl, his date for the evening, looked bored and took out a cigarette. Basil reached desperately for his lighter but couldn't remember which pocket it was in. Basil's cousin, Raymond, who was chatting with his girl Susan, took out a Dunhill, leaned across and lit Cheryl's cigarette with an easy movement. He didn't interrupt his flow of conversation but gave Cheryl a dazzling smile as she bent to the flame.

Basil looked at his lighter now out of sight beneath the table. Furtively, he put it back in his pocket.

Raymond had arrived recently for a brief holiday and had persuaded Basil to 'do the town' with him. He even arranged Basil's date.

"She's a good sport," he told Basil. "I took her out last time I was here. Not very bright, but eager to please. All she wants is a good time and a bit of chatting up."

Basil remembered those words now. It had seemed inviting when Raymond talked about it, yet they had been together now for two hours and Basil had hardly said more than 'hello' to his date.

"Let's go to a discothèque," Raymond suggested. "That's a terrific idea," said Cheryl, cutting across Basil's reply. She brightened. Basil thought: Oh no, she's a dancing fiend. He hated dancing. It made him feel exposed and ridiculous and his muscles tighted so that his movements became jerky.

In the dusky atmosphere of the discothèque they found a table and ordered drinks. Raymond took his partner, found a few inches of space on the floor and they began to quiver to the music.

Cheryl looked at him, then looked pointedly at the dance floor. At least, thought Basil, there's so much noise I don't have to talk. That's a laugh, he thought. Me talk. All I've been doing tonight has been worrying about making conversation, but I haven't actually made any.

He followed Cheryl on to the floor. At once she closed her eyes and surrendered herself to the music. She was an instinctive dancer and moved easily with the rhythm.

She's got a great figure, thought Basil, seeing the lines of her body emphasised by the movements of the dance. He wondered what it would be like to make love to her. To any woman. His cheeks were burning. I'm blushing, he thought. Thank heavens, the light's got a red tinge. A seventeen-year-old virgin, that's what I am. He didn't know of any of his friends who had not already had sex. Unless they're all liars like me.

The dance ended and Cheryl stopped moving. She looked at him with disdain. "Thanks," she said and walked past him.

Basil squeezed past her to his place. She said, "Damn!" He looked back to see that he had knocked over her drink. Her Tom Collins, full of sliced fruit, lay in her lap.

She gave him a look of hatred and rose. "You are the limit! You sit all night not talking to me, sneering at me all the time and now you spill drink all over my new dress." She looked ready for tears. Raymond arrived at the table and began talking to her. To Basil's amazement, within seconds Cheryl was laughing—her mood completely changed. Basil left the table without speaking. At the door of the discothèque he looked back. The three of them were talking. They didn't look up. He was certain they didn't even know he had left.

He drove home and for the rest of the week made sure that he wouldn't meet Raymond, but Raymond didn't attempt to phone him. They had an arrangement for the next day, but Raymond ignored it. Basil spotted Cheryl a few times in the street, but always managed to avoid the embarrassment of meeting her.

It was 10.30. Basil settled himself in his cubicle in Dino's. He liked this restaurant because it was so private. You could sit alone in your cubicle and be spared the inquisitive looks of the other people. A waiter appeared and he ordered a drink. Maisie, his wife, should finish her meeting by 11.00. Half an hour in which he could enjoy his solitude and have a few drinks to cheer himself. He had suffered another humiliating evening at his father's, who no longer made any pretence of sparing his feelings. Maurice now called him a failure to his face. A disgrace. Basil thought of the bitter exchanges with other members of the family looking on and nodding their united disapproval. I don't feel anything any more, Basil told himself. I just sit and let it run over me. I'm numb, beyond their reach, beyond their contempt. He went to his father's store every day, did as he was told, stayed out of everyone's way and at the end of the month paid his generous cheque into the bank. His wife's rich father never let his daughter want for anything. He and Maisie were well off, always drove a current model car, had a big home and two young children. It's still not worth it, thought Basil. Life is meaningless.

A man passed Basil's cubicle and eased himself into the one adjoining. Basil listened to the conversation.

"As I was saying," said a male voice, "I found out today what this idiot is earning. I couldn't believe it. I know he's the boss's son, but they should pay him a fortune to keep away from the business."

"Oh God," thought Basil, "it's Mannie Harris and he's talking about me."

Harris was the head salesman at the store. He was the same age as Basil's father and they had worked together all their lives.

Basil felt like getting up and leaving before he heard any more. He was half out of his seat when curiosity drew him back. Let him say what he likes, he thought defiantly. It's all been said before, anyway. He felt a masochistic urge to find out what Harris really thought about the Cane family. He leaned in his seat, turning his head so that he would catch every word. Harris was an extrovert and had a loud voice. Basil could hear him clearly.

"You don't live here," said Mannie to his unknown confidant, "so the name Cane means nothing to you. Let me tell you, in this town, the Canes count. Maurice Cane has got his finger in every pie, and very few pies get divided up without him having his say. What I can't understand, and what the whole town can't understand, is how he managed to have such a *nebish* for a son. Where did he come from? There must have been a travelling salesman who popped into the Cane bedroom when Maurice was away on business . . ."

There was subdued laughter and the sound of glasses being filled.

"Seriously, though," said Harris, "this guy is such a nothing I find it hard to believe he's for real. Do you know," he paused, "in the days when Maurice still believed that his eldest son would be his successor, he pulled strings to get him admitted to university. All the boy did when he got there was sit around, gamble and generally get in people's way."

In the next booth, Basil sat motionless, his drink for-

gotten, his eyes downcast. He thought back to those terrible days at university. He knew he didn't deserve to be there. Father had pulled strings to get him in—which he hardly believed to be possible. That you could bribe your way into an institution of learning . . . He had felt like an imposter. How could he give of his best under such circumstances? This is just self-justification, he thought, and smiled bitterly.

Harris's voice continued. "So when Basil gets sent down, Daddy Cane has only one course left. He takes him into the business, but when it comes to dealing with his family, Maurice can't put a foot right. He starts his son at the bottom, because he wants him to learn the whole business, yet he pays top salary right from the beginning, so there you have young Cane working next to the junior staff and having to be pals with the clerks, then he gets into his Sunbeam sports and drives off to a mansion. What kind of logic is that? Young Basil soon caught on that he was in the chips whatever happened. Why should he do any work when he was getting a fat cheque anyway?" Harris paused. When he spoke again there was jealousy in his voice. "I only found out today what the old lunatic is really paying him. It's criminal."

Criminal? thought Basil. Perhaps it is. But you can't understand. You think I'm just a loafer who takes what's going and deliberately doesn't do any work. Why can't you understand that I'm just no good . . .? Basil looked at his hands, his fingers were clenched, his knuckles white. He relaxed and spread his hands on the table.

"What Maurice found out was that Basil can't make a decision, and if he does try to make one, it'll be wrong."

"You're depressing me," said the other voice. "So he's a loser. How can you be a loser when you've got money? Don't waste time feeling sorry for him."

"Who's sorry?" said Harris. "It's injustice, that's all. I haven't told you half of it yet. They've got the failure of the century on their hands, but he's a Cane, so something must be done with him. What do they do? A business merger. They marry their failure to one of the

wealthiest girls in the country. Maisie Raubenheimer."

The other man interrupted: "So how's he a loser?"

"Let me finish," said Harris. "This girl, if you'll pardon the expression, is guaranteed to win any competition for Miss Ugly. She's a walking disaster, a figure like a horse, and a face like a pig."

"What a picture," said the other man.

Maisie, thought Basil. Thank God you're not listening to this. Poor Maisie. A kind-hearted girl who just wants to please. She can't help the way she looks. He felt indignation. That's my wife they're talking about. He thought of bursting into the next alcove and making a scene but he knew he could never do it. I'd probably trip and fall on my face, he thought.

"There you have it," said Mannie Harris. "The Cane failure story. Basil's a nothing, his wife's a pig, and their children are nonentities. But he's still being paid more than me."

"That's life," said the listener.

I can't take any more of this, thought Basil. I'll pay the bill and go. He leaned out of the alcove and signalled to the head waiter on the other side of the room. He sat there awkwardly, too timid to raise his voice or click his fingers. The waiter didn't notice him. Eventually he went to the waiter, who was instantly full of apologies. Basil over-tipped him then went outside and waited for his ungainly wife. They drove to their home and their two timid, tongue-tied children.

CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS

There are multitudes of Basil and Maisie Canes in the world—people who seem to have everything, yet have none of the true riches—professional satisfactions, pride in accomplishment, confident and vigorous enjoyment of what life has to offer, the ability to give and receive love.

Basil's basic trouble was his father who was so determined to protect him from life, that he robbed him of the

ability to live it to the full. He created in his son a conviction that he was incapable of accomplishment, by denying him any opportunity of achieving the things that other boys of his age could accomplish.

From his earliest years, Basil felt inadequate. His father wouldn't let him do the same things as other boys and because his father seemed incapable of making a wrong decision this meant that Basil felt he was *not good enough* to do anything.

"Don't walk on the wall!" "But, father, the neighbour's son walks on the wall and nothing happens to him!" The implication was that the neighbour's son was *better* than he was, that was why he could walk on walls with impunity.

His parents kept confirming Basil's inferior beliefs. They would not let him ride a bicycle like other boys. They would not let him ride a horse, although he was permitted a jog on a donkey, with his father present. It was a pattern clearly established by his dominating, overpowering father. His father made the decisions, because he knew best. Eventually, Basil's reflex in any situation was negative—not to make decisions. To develop any muscle it must be used. Basil was never given the opportunity to flex his decision-making ability, so it withered. He could not develop independence, but he did develop the belief that he was worthless.

In the same way, his father found fault with any friends he chose. Basil had been brought up without ever being allowed to make a decision and this inability to decide on issues would stay with him throughout his life.

Basil always believed that he was going to be a disappointment to his 'faultless' parents because he could not measure up to what they expected of him. He tried hard to please them in his scholastic work. But, because he felt he was incapable of succeeding, he created a mental short-circuit which made it impossible to remember what he had learned so laboriously.

He *had* to fail, because he convinced himself he wasn't good enough to succeed.

When he grew older and his father pulled strings to get him into university, the sense of being a phony was intensified. Basil knew he didn't deserve to be in university and instead of seizing the opportunity, forced himself to fail again.

Basil found himself in a terrifying situation. His hopes of becoming a professional man had now faded. He knew he was destined for the family business. But he knew, equally, that he could never emulate his father in that business.

Basil's father made the worst move possible. He brought Basil into the business. Basil was now close to his father at all times and constantly reminded of his own inability. Maurice Cane, while ranting about Basil's lack of executive abilities, never gave him the opportunity to develop any. Basil did not seek responsibility because he knew he could not accept it. In any event his father did not offer responsibilities to him.

In relationships with the opposite sex, Basil was a non-starter. He could not summon up enough courage to touch a girl's hand because he was too frightened of the humiliation of a rebuff. To him, it seemed inevitable that he would be rejected by any girl. When his parents, in desperation, arranged a marriage of convenience, he meekly acquiesced.

Basil and Maisie made an extremely dull, uninteresting couple. Both had been spoilt from birth by over-indulgent parents. They had plenty of money, but very little of anything else. They were doomed to an existence in which the dominant colour was grey—the depressing grey of mediocrity.

But, in the case of the Canes, there was a partially happy ending.

Maurice Cane had abandoned hope for his own son. But he began to see similar negative qualities emerging in his grandson, Abraham. What happened was that the sense of inferiority generated by Basil Cane and his wife had communicated to *their* son.

Horrified at the prospect of Basil's son becoming

another Basil, Maurice Cane brought his grandson to me. Maurice, of course regarded himself as the only blameless person in the story. Yet, he was, in fact, the villain. It was he who robbed his own son of confidence.

When the grandson was brought to see me, I realised the pattern of cause and effect, and I insisted that I see all three Canes together for a discussion. When father, son and grandson were assembled, I made it clear that Grandpa was the cause of all the trouble, although motivated by the best of intentions. When this had sunk in, I banished Maurice from the meeting.

For the first time, Basil Cane saw his 'omnipotent' father defeated. He began to realise that his father might be a god with feet of clay.

Basil Cane co-operated wholeheartedly in the treatment of his nine-year-old son—and in the process found personal benefits in gaining confidence for himself.

The defects of the father and the grandfather were explained to the youngster, with his father present and helping in the discussion. We were successful in arresting the negative trend in the youngster's behaviour and finally reversing it. A destructive pattern which could have wrought havoc in the Cane family for generations was eliminated.

7: My Heart Belongs To Daddy

Carol woke up sneezing. She rubbed the back of her hand across her nose, but as soon as she took her hand away, there the tickling feeling was again. She opened her eyes properly. Her father was leaning over her, tickling her nose with the lucky rabbit's foot he always carried. Carol gave a gurgling laugh of pleasure and her father picked her up and held her in his arms. She could feel the slight stubble of beard on his cheeks, and the roughness of his jacket. It was the middle of the night but that didn't seem to bother Carol's father. He put her on a stool in the kitchen and turned to the stove.

"You like pancakes, don't you, Carol?" he asked.

"Yes, Daddy," she said, still rubbing the sleep from her eyes. Then she sat upright, a prim three-year-old with pigtails.

He made a heap of pancakes, sprinkled with cinnamon. She sat on his lap and they ate them all.

"Where have you been, Daddy?" Carol asked him.

"Working," he said. He never explained what took him away from home for so long, or brought him back unexpectedly for only a few hours.

Carol's father took her back to bed, kissed her good night and said he was going upstairs to talk to her mother.

Carol lay there, thinking about the last time she'd seen her father. He arrived early in the evening and they went into the garden. He showed her a hedgehog, putting it on a spade so she could look at it properly. Then he'd gone off again.

Carol fell asleep. When she woke the next day her father had left. She never saw him again. She was told later that he was killed in a plane crash.

When Carol turned four, her mother decided it was time for her daughter to join a dancing school.

"You're lucky to have the opportunity I never had," said Beatrice Kaye, a smartly-tailored figure with tinted red hair. "But I'm not going to deny you the chance of a career."

She enjoyed the dancing school, mixing with the other children, the music and the movement. After a year the school staged its annual show, and Carol was given a leading part. She had a solo spot dancing and was given a few verses to sing. On the night of the performance Carol's mother was so nervous that Carol began to be upset on her mother's behalf. "Now don't worry, darling, everything will be all right," said Mrs Kaye nervously dabbing Carol's make-up. Carol couldn't understand why her mother should be so worried.

She took her position on stage, the music picked her up and she began to sing. When she had finished she was surprised by the noise coming from the audience. It was as though she could feel warmth flowing across the footlights to her, filling a hollow inside her with affection. Carol stopped, overwhelmed. Instead of going offstage, she walked forward to look over the lights. There was a ripple of laughter, growing in volume, then another outburst of applause. Carol stood, smiling back until she heard an urgent voice calling her off stage.

"Never do that again!" said Miss Traub, the director.

"Why not?" asked Carol.

"Because you're breaking the rules, that's why!"

But then Miss Traub melted. "You were wonderful, Carol," she said. "They loved you, and so do I." She picked Carol up and spun her about. "You're a proper little angel."

All the way to the dressing room, people were patting her head and kissing her. Carol thought it was the nicest experience she'd ever had. Her mother was delighted. The show was repeated several times and at every performance Carol experienced the same sensation of love, and the warmth of being wanted.

"Come on, darling," shouted Beatrice Kaye. "The audi-

tion is at 10.30 and we don't want to be late, now, do we?"

Upstairs in her room, Carol grimaced at herself in the mirror. She felt she had been to enough auditions to last for the rest of her life. Every week, it seemed, her mother saw what she thought might be an opportunity for the world to discover the remarkable talents of her daughter. And every week she made certain that Carol was among scores, often hundreds, of other young girls, hoping that someone would sprinkle the magic dust of theatrical recognition upon them.

Carol didn't even know what sort of audition she was attending. Dancers were needed, she knew, but she had no idea what kind. Her mother was inclined to group all performers together. "An entertainer is an entertainer," she would say. "Either you have the magic or you don't."

Carol inspected herself in the mirror. She looked all right, she decided. Her blonde hair was the fashionable length. Her blue eyes were widely spaced. She had the vulnerable look of the easily injured. Already, at the age of ten, she knew the devastating effect she could have on men by turning her eyes on them with a helpless expression. It was no spurious trick, either, on Carol's part. She *was* helpless, and vulnerable. She liked to have people around her to lean upon for advice and guidance.

"Carol! Come *on*!" Her mother's voice had an edge to it—a note of anger which she recognised.

"Coming!" she shouted and grabbing her vanity case, ran downstairs.

They were outside the theatre punctually. When Beatrice Kaye organised, she organised to the split second.

Inside, in the familiar atmosphere of respectful anticipation, Carol took in the scene. One glance at the stage was enough to give her a slightly sick feeling. That was André Fortune, the choreographer, unmistakable in his beret, boots and with his long cigarette-holder—the epitome of the high camp dancer.

Carol tried to catch her mother's sleeve, as Beatrice Kaye forged through the auditorium like a galleon under full sail. She missed and had to run to catch up with her.

"Mother! Mother!" she said, trying to keep her voice down.

"What is it?" said Beatrice, slowing to a halt, her voice penetrating through the theatre.

"I've just realised they're auditioning for *All at Once*," said Carol.

"Of course! But I explained that to you . . ." Beatrice waved an impatient arm.

"You didn't, mother!" said Carol. "You didn't tell me a thing! The point is that I'm no good for this sort of show . . ."

"Rubbish!" Beatrice's voice cut her short. "Don't ever say that. You're good enough for anything!" Her voice was raised and people nearby turned to glance at them. Carol felt embarrassment flooding up within her.

"Please, mother, listen to me," she said, her voice quivering. "Don't you even realise what kind of dancer I am? I've only studied classical forms until now. For this show they want avant-garde dancers. Mr Fortune up there—" she pointed nervously, and her mother swung around to follow the indication—"is the apostle of abandonment in creative dancing. If I went on stage I'd make a complete fool of myself—and of you. I'd be wasting everyone's time."

Beatrice Kaye glowered at her daughter. "Oh," she said. "You might at least have mentioned this before."

Carol shrugged helplessly. To her mother, a dancer was a dancer, and an actor was an actor. Different schools of acting or of dancing meant nothing to her.

"Wait here!" commanded Beatrice. Carol watched her mother cut through the people in the theatre, heading for the secretary seated at a folding table in the corner.

"My name is Mrs Beatrice Kaye." Carol heard the words from the other side of the auditorium. She noticed people halting in mid-conversation and turning.

"I want you to strike my daughter's name from your list of dancers auditioning today. Carol Kaye. We were brought here under false pretences."

The secretary looked over her glasses with a malicious

grin. "With pleasure, Mrs . . . er . . . Clark, did you say?"

"Kaye," said Beatrice, invincibly. "Kaye. Remember the name. You'll be hearing a lot of it in future."

A barely concealed murmur of laughter broke out among the dancers, publicity men, photographers and stagehands.

Carol thought: I pray to God that the ground will open up and swallow me for ever. She turned and walked towards the exit, unseeingly. She felt people bumping into her but paid no attention. Then she heard her mother.

"Fancy that," she said. "A morning wasted. I wish you'd explain these things to me beforehand, darling."

Carol didn't bother to reply. She felt lost, helpless, humiliated. Her mother was so insensitive at times that it horrified her. It made her imagine that she wasn't her *real* mother. In such moments of fantasy she would imagine her father, a tall, handsome, dignified man with greying hair, holding the arm of a beautiful, willowy blonde girl who laughed a lot and looked into his strong gentle eyes. The blonde was her mother, and she looked remarkably like Carol.

Back in their apartment, Beatrice made coffee and, in a familiar ritual, they sat opposite each other. Beatrice did the talking and Carol the listening.

"When we lost your father," she said, "I really didn't know where to turn. But thank God I found the strength within me to be a mother and a father to you."

Carol sat and listened, sipping her coffee.

"Somehow, your father knew that you would have a career on the stage." Beatrice was launched on one of her favourite trips into nostalgia. Carol recognised the pattern of the conversation.

"I don't suppose you remember, but when you were less than four years old, you put on a complete song and dance routine in your father's study."

As her mother explored the familiar territory of this memory, Carol was not sure whether she remembered the incident or not. The story had been told to her, or in her

presence, so often that it had become inextricably linked in her mind with her own precious memories of her father.

She recalled him, now, picking her up and cooking pancakes for her. She tingled with pleasure at the memory.

Her mother's voice intruded again "... his foresight proved true. Look at the successes you've had. All those plays at the dancing school and at high school and you know very well what your tutors think of you. You're another Judy Garland, they say. 'What a voice,' says Mrs Palewski, 'it could melt the money in your pocket.' And she should know. She has taught some of the biggest names."

Carol sighed. She always felt embarrassed when her mother went on like this, but at the same time it was nice to be praised. And, after all, her mother wasn't inventing. Mrs Palewski, stern voice-teacher that she was, had enthused about her talent, so did her dancing teacher, and her drama coach. They couldn't all be wrong. And she enjoyed every appearance on stage. She seemed to have a different sort of first-night nerves. She was exhilarated rather than nervous. She looked forward to the moment when she faced an audience.

Carol sank in her chair. With her mother to guide her, she had everything in the world to look forward to.

Carol squinted her eyes slightly in protection against the glare of the naked bulbs around the mirror in the dressing room. On either side of her the other girls were chattering. It was the third week of her first professional appearance in Lon Davidson's new revue and the enmities and alliances of the dressing room had long since become sharply defined. The girls on either side of Carol—Maggie on her left, Toni on her right—were her best friends. But Carol was not an abrasive personality or sexually ambitious enough to antagonise the other girls. Most of them thought of her as pleasant and unsophisticated. Some envied her wide-eyed appeal and fabulous figure.

"I don't get you, Carol," said Maggie. "How could you

get up and leave the party last night. All those fantastic fellas."

"Tommy was really gone on you, you know that," said Toni. "He couldn't stop talking about you. A real drag, he became."

Carol made a tiny adjustment to her make-up.

"I dunno. I find them boring."

Toni shrieked: "Boring! That guy Tommy radiates sex and you find him boring." She let out a raucous laugh.

"No, I mean it," said Carol. "I like older men. Tommy and the others are overgrown schoolboys. They don't have anything to talk about and you don't have to be a mind-reader to know what they're thinking. I'd rather be on my own."

"Who *do* you fancy, then?" asked Toni, turning to Carol with genuine curiosity.

Carol looked at her friends. "I'll tell you the sort of man I go for." She was silent for a second, watching the girls' inquisitiveness grow. "Mr Hopkirk, that's who."

"You mean the drama critic?" said Toni. "But he's fifty if he's a day. Mind you, he is a good-looking old guy, if you like that sort of thing," she added.

"And what's more," said Carol, "he's taking me to dinner tonight after the show."

The girls erupted into shrieks and noises, the length of the dressing room, as the news was conveyed.

"Watch out, Carol," shouted one girl. "He's a dirty old man. Because you land in his bed doesn't mean you'll end up in his column!"

They all laughed.

"He's not like that," said Carol. "He's a gentleman."

"Whatever that is," sniffed Toni.

"So you like them older, eh?" said Maggie reflectively. "Old guys have got one big thing going for them," she said. "Money."

Carol didn't make it into Hopkirk's bed. But she did end up in his column. He dubbed her "a star of tomorrow". He singled her out as "a natural stage presence . . . the sort of personality who could light up a stage though

never given a line to say." He predicted that her unique voice and unusual looks would find her a place among the stars.

The atmosphere was electrifying and the noise was overwhelming. People were standing, applauding and shouting. The acclamation was a gust of emotion, pouring over Carol. She stood, head bowed, on stage. Around her, the entire cast had joined in the applause of the audience.

Carol felt strange. It was as though something bottled within her was uncorked. It surged as a wave of love for the audience. She stretched out her arms and her eyes filled with tears. That simple movement whipped up the applause to yet another peak.

It was the opening night of *Let's Live*, the new musical by the famous team of Bender and Whiteman. Carol had moved up in the theatre since her first professional appearance. And she had graduated by strides. Bender and Whiteman had seen her last show and auditioned her at once. She was exactly what they wanted. Tonight's success proved they had lost none of their acumen for spotting talent. This was a triumph of the theatre, a night to be talked about for decades.

As the curtain came down finally, Carol made her way to her dressing room—this time with a star on the door. She was light-headed, transported into a world of unreality. She could sense the deference accorded her by everyone on stage. They cleared the path for her, spoke in reverential tones, looked at her with new light in their eyes.

Her mother was in tears of triumph and ambition fulfilled. "I told you, I told you," she said over and over, clasping Carol to her. "You're going to be a great star!"

Later, the producer took them to a restaurant dinner party, to wait for the first editions of the morning papers. Tonight he was not worried. No critic would dare to pan such an obvious success.

As they took their places at the table Carol glanced around, smiling. She saw a distinguished man close by, regarding her with friendly eyes. She recognised him at

once—Paul Friedlander. She'd seen his picture in the press hundreds of times and he featured regularly in the television talk shows. He was probably the most successful film producer in the country. They exchanged smiles and she felt a flutter of excitement. Friedlander was a power in entertainment. He was an attractive man, grey at the temples, dressed expensively but not flamboyantly.

She knew this was going to be a night she would enjoy.

As the evening progressed and the early-morning rave reviews came in, Carol and Friedlander seemed to gravitate toward each other. Soon they were lost in conversation. Paul had a deep, resonant voice and a quick sense of humour. Carol felt secure with him, amused by his wit and his sophistication, assured by his air of authority.

Friedlander was enchanted by this young woman. On stage she had a big voice, capable of soaring into exciting registers of emotion and passion. She danced with sexual electricity yet gave off a note of pathos. Here, talking with her at two in the morning, he noticed her waif-like quality. Her large eyes fixed on him with total concentration. She showed her amusement without inhibition. He was a man who had known many women but he felt himself drawn to her.

Equally important, he recognised a major talent, a performer who would be in the forefront of entertainment for many years. One would have to be deaf, blind and moronic not to recognise her talent. He talked about a film. She was interested and flattered. They arranged to meet a few days later.

Carol made a film for Friedlander, then another. He signed her to a long-term contract. They grew closer and closer, on and off the set.

Inevitably, they decided to marry. It made sense professionally and economically. They were together so often that being married would hardly change anything—apart from sharing a bed.

Strangely, they had not had a sexual encounter. Friedlander sometimes marvelled at himself for not having pressed the issue but it had never arisen as a matter of

primary importance, although he desired her. Perhaps, he thought, the difference in their ages had something to do with it. He was fifty-five and she was only twenty-four. But in the world of show business, age discrepancy hardly counted.

They were married in an inter-denominational chapel. The ceremony was attended by Carol's mother, Friedlander's brother and sister (his only surviving relatives) and about a hundred of the leading luminaries of films, television and theatre.

Afterwards, Friedlander took Carol to his hunting lodge in the mountains. They had a quiet dinner together. He opened a bottle of champagne. Conversation flowed, full of the excitement of their marriage, their past accomplishments and things planned. Then it was time for bed. Carol went to the bathroom and Friedlander poured a measure of Scotch. He enjoyed the glow.

He sat on the bed in his dressing-gown, wondering with mild humour how their first sexual experience would be. It was almost a classically orthodox marriage, he thought with a touch of cynicism. Older man and young virgin, meeting for the first time in the nuptial bed. But he knew that Carol was not a virgin, nor would he want the wearisome responsibility of initiating a sexual novice. He and Carol had spent many, many hours in totally frank conversation and she had told him of several lovers, first at drama school and then at intervals later. She had dismissed them with an extraordinary casual air—"Oh, they were just boys . . ."

He heard Carol's footsteps and looked up, smiling. She came into the bedroom with her characteristic grace. He caught his breath. My God! She looks as though she's playing Ophelia.

Carol was in flowing white. Her nightgown began at the neck and swept to the carpet in a train. Her hair was drawn back and her face was clear of make-up.

Friedlander stood up, involuntarily, triggered by an instinctive respect.

Carol Kaye, super star of theatre and films, one of the

most universally desired women in the Western world, walked to him and stood demurely.

"Good night, darling," she said.

Friedlander realised with a shock that she was presenting her forehead for a kiss. He bent and kissed her, as she obviously expected him to, and Carol rolled back the sheets and slid quickly into bed. She lay quietly, not looking at him.

Friedlander, drink in hand, felt amazed. He sat heavily on the edge of the bed and studied his wife. My wife, he thought. She looked utterly content, lying next to him. Friedlander suddenly felt anger. This is absurd, he thought. He leaned over and stripped the sheets from Carol.

She turned her head to watch him. She looked utterly submissive. Friedlander left inflamed by her body, outlined beneath the ridiculous nightgown, more suited to a fifteen-year-old than a woman in the full flower of her sexuality. Those eyes, he thought . . . the body of a whore and the eyes of an innocent.

He put down his whisky, took off his dressing-gown and reached for his wife. She came, accommodatingly. Friedlander was conscious of his careful sensitivity as he coaxed her into sharing the sexual experience. He was caught on the tide of sex as he felt Carol surrender her magnificent body to him. The frenzy of climax racked him, and he fell back on the bed. He leaned across and kissed Carol. She put her arms around him and hugged him. She had uttered no sound during their sexual union. Her expression was unchanged—passive, willing, submissive, but not animated in any way.

Friedlander got up hurriedly and went into his study where he lit a cigar. He felt curiously guilty, as though he had violated a child. He examined his thoughts and was surprised by what he found. He felt strongly protective toward Carol—yet he wanted her again, already. He stubbed out the cigar and returned to the bedroom.

As he got into bed, Carol's arms encircled him and her mouth sought his in hungry passion. Friedlander fell back, once more astonished. Desire reared within him as he felt

Carol's hand run down his chest, explore his loins and begin to manipulate his genitals.

The innocent was transformed into an abandoned woman with no inhibitions. Her mouth explored his body and her long limbs and flowing hair tumbled about him as she took from him every ounce of sexual passion and drive.

Afterward, he lay limp and content.

Carol had said nothing. Now she kissed him and whispered. "I didn't please you the first time, did I?"

He muttered: "Darling . . . it doesn't matter . . ."

But she persisted: "Now? Was it better now?"

"Carol," he said, lifting himself on an elbow, "it's *never* been better . . ."

"That's good. I just want to please you," she said, rolled over and to his astonishment was asleep within seconds.

Once again, Friedlander was alone with his enigma—I've married a kook, he thought. But what a beautiful kook! The more he thought about that second sexual encounter, the more convinced he became that she had experienced very little passion or excitement herself. She functioned fully as a woman, physically and in every other way, but she seemed unawakened. He was a man of experience. Carol had been play-acting, but magnificently so!

She's unique in real life, he thought. And she's unique in bed.

He turned on his side and fell into a puzzled but satisfied sleep.

Three months after her marriage, Carol was loaned out by Friedlander to another film company. They had a script, which was, they believed, ideal for Carol's particular talent. Friedlander read the script, agreed with their judgment—and negotiated an enormous fee for Carol's services.

Much of the film was to be shot on location, and for at least two weeks Carol and her husband would be parted. His commitments in the city made it impossible for him to

fly cross-country to be with his wife. It was their first separation, and Carol found herself at a loss without Friedlander's quiet strength and masculine decisiveness.

Friedlander, for his part, was almost pleased to have the two-week respite. It was not that his love for Carol had cooled. On the contrary, he had learned to enjoy her on every level—physical, mental and professional. He still could not understand what motivated her on a sexual plane, but whatever it was, it proved very satisfying for *him.*

The trouble was that Carol had become almost too demanding, sexually. She seemed to draw emotional strength from him. Even though he was a man of exceptional vigour, Friedlander often felt drained. It was a relief to be able to devote himself to masculine activities, to drink with his bachelor friends, to visit his clubs and turn his back on sex and the emotional demands which went with it.

With three major films behind her, each one a bigger success than its predecessor, Carol now warranted true star status. Her treatment by the film studio was in accord with her exalted position in the hierarchy of filmdom. An executive was deputed to attend to her. Joe Simpson was one of the bright young men who had majored in economics and been drafted into service with one of the corporation giants which had bought into the film industry and was determined to run it efficiently.

His job was to keep an eye on expenditure, trim back artistic excesses and yet keep everyone happy.

After three tough assignments with temperamental artists, Simpson was given the Carol Kaye commitment.

His superior briefed him: "Nobody seems to know what she's like. She could be a tyrant, she could be a doll. More likely the former. In any case she's the most important property we've handled this year. Mollycoddle her. See she wants for nothing... you know the routine. But remember, this is a very special person."

When he met Carol, Joe proved as susceptible as

everyone to her appeal. She was an easily likeable girl, still unaffected by her success. Watching her in rehearsal, Simpson thought: There's a crackle of sexuality about her, yet she looks like a child. Look at those eyes . . . even the way she walks. She had a way of running the pink tip of her tongue over her teeth. It was provocative and childish at the same time.

He introduced himself and explained the position. She smiled, disbelievingly. "You mean the studio have sent you just to look after me?"

"That's perfectly correct, Miss Kaye."

"Please call me Carol," she said. "And what's your first name?"

He told her.

"I don't believe in standing on ceremony. If we're going to be seeing a lot of each other we'd better be on first-name terms," she said.

Joe soon discovered that Carol Kaye was no prima donna. She was embarrassingly normal. She had no bizarre requirements, no regal expectations, no storms of hysteria and no displays of temperament. She explained how she saw the few weeks on location. "I just want to be left alone to work on my script. I'm quite comfortable in my caravan. I need never leave it, really."

The studio had given Carol a de-luxe caravan with wall to wall carpeting and every mechanical device imaginable including television and a telephone. Friedlander rang her at least once a day. It was almost like living in a luxury hotel.

In the second week of location, Joe Simpson walked to Carol's caravan. Her first call was at 10.30 a.m. but a crisis on the set had just made it impossible for her scene to be shot that day.

He knocked on the door. "It's Joe." Carol told him to come in, he moved inside and enjoyed the chill of the air-conditioning.

"Go into the lounge," shouted Carol. "I'll join you in a minute. Help yourself to a beer."

Joe took a cold beer and drank it from the can. Although

it was only 9.30 a.m. the sun was generating a fierce heat which parched his throat.

He walked over to the sleeping area of the caravan and tapped on Carol's door. "No need to hurry. Your scene has been cancelled for today. A technical problem has come up and they can't use you until tomorrow. You can take the day off."

He heard her exclaim: "Oh no!" Most actresses would have been delighted to have the day free. Film work was mostly tedium. But Carol Kaye was different. She honestly seemed at her happiest when she was in front of the camera. She was buddies with the crew and the director thought she was too good to be true. No temperament, no absurd vanities—just a dedication to work and a desire to get each shot as perfect as possible. "I've already been made up," she complained. "Just hang on while I wipe it off."

Ten minutes later Carol joined him in the lounge. She had her hair loose, a soft blonde cloud. She wore a halter, shorts and sandals. Her colouring was nut brown . . .

He thought: She's good enough to eat, then averted his glance. He didn't want her to see the desire in his eyes.

Carol stood in the lounge, unsure of what to do with herself. "I think I'll make some coffee," she announced, switched her hair over her shoulders like a teenager and went to the kitchen.

Joe took another beer. This is work? he thought. Here he was alone with an international beauty . . . He amused himself by savouring the cliché—international beauty. But, that was Carol all right. He thought of the view he had of her walking into the kitchen, her long legs, her slender waist. He tried to think of some other subject.

Carol came back into the lounge with her coffee. She sprawled on the divan.

"What went wrong?" she asked.

"The sound-man said his equipment has developed a bug. We're flying in some new stuff. We should be able to roll tomorrow." He gave a grin of satisfaction. "We can't

complain, you know. This is the first set-back we've had. We're within time and below budget." Even though these weren't his responsibilities on this picture, he still took a professional's vicarious pride in efficiency.

Carol gave him a long look over her coffee cup. "You know, Joe, you're very sexy."

Simpson nearly spilled his beer. He suddenly felt naked, as though she could read his mind. Only seconds ago he'd been having such thoughts about this girl. He flushed but managed to carry off his embarrassment by raising his beer can.

"Well," he said, "that's a petty compliment coming from the sex symbol of the world!" He laughed and drank.

"I mean it, Joe." Carol stretched out on the couch. The movement threw the contours of her body into relief. "I believe that if one has a compliment to pay, one should pay it. People are quick to say nasty things. They're not so eager when it comes to praise." She turned on her side on the divan, as relaxed, thought Simpson, as a kitten.

She gave him a long look. "Come. Sit here, next to me." She patted the tiny unoccupied area on the divan.

Simpson got up and perched on the vacant spot. She rolled on her hips, making space, and then adjusted her body so that her legs curled past his waist in a neat, enveloping manoeuvre. Simpson took a swig from his beer. He felt light-headed. First the heat, then the cold beers, then this incredible come-on. He let his hand fall casually on Carol's shoulder. She traced a pattern with her fingers on the back of his hand. "You're hairy," she said. "I like that." She put her other hand inside his shirt and took hold of the hairs on his chest, pulling gently. Simpson felt himself quivering. Her proximity excited him on the most primitive level.

She put her hand around his neck, pulled him down and kissed him. The smell of her, the feel of her, the heat of her voluptuous body brought him to a peak of desire. He was breathless and he broke away from her grasp for a moment. Carol looked at him. This close he could see there

were little flecks in her eyes. "I want you," she said. It was a matter-of-fact announcement. She lifted her body up and he slipped his arm around the back and took off the halter. He kissed her breasts, Carol began to undress him and he feverishly stripped her. In the confusion and the energy of their efforts they rolled off the couch on to the carpet. They coupled on the floor. As aroused as he was, Simpson retained enough detachment to marvel at the extent of the woman's abandonment. Amid animal noises she reached a climax, then another, and another, giving ecstatic cries every time. Then he spent himself. They rolled apart for a while. Then Carol came to him again, this time with a slow eroticism which transcended any sexual experience he had ever had.

Afterwards they lay, slightly apart, on the carpet. He glanced at Carol. Her eyes were closed and she was breathing heavily. She had the look of a sexually satiated woman, complacent and peaceful.

The 'phone rang.

Carol opened her eyes, half sat up and leaned on one elbow.

"What time is it?" she asked.

He still had his watch on. "Ten-fifteen," he said.

Carol let out a squeal of delight. "It's Paul," she said. "I told him my call on set was for 10.30." She leaped to her feet and picked up the phone.

"Yes, darling," she cried. "Where *are* you?"

Simpson slowly got up from the floor, watching Carol as she spoke on the phone to her husband, stark naked and totally unconcerned. Simpson felt ashamed and began to dress but listened to the 'phone conversation. It was superficial talk, full of enthusiasms and gushes of affection from Carol. She finally put down the 'phone. She was still naked. "I miss him so much," she said softly to herself and walked across the lounge into her bedroom.

Simpson waited a few moments, then put his head through the bedroom door. "I'd better go. I have a few chores," he lied.

"What?" said Carol. She was sitting in front of her

dressing-table. She was still naked. "Oh! Okay," she said. "See you."

Simpson went out and stood for a little while, the sun beating down on him, the perspiration trickling down his back.

He thought: What a woman! She must be a nympho. He re-thought: No. A weirdo. He tried to recall everything that had happened, retracing step by step. "She has it like going to a movie," he thought. From the time we had sex until I left she never even glanced at me. The most important thing that happened in there was the 'phone call from her husband.

He shrugged, and walked off. The perils of the film business, he thought.

The next day, and every day until the end of location shooting, Carol didn't notice Joe Simpson.

Friedlander sat alone in his cubicle at the club. He had a glass of liqueur brandy in his hand, the final touch to a superb meal. Solitude, Friedlander believed, was a great clarifier of thought. Problems and irritations found their true perspective. Tonight he had come to the club, alone, and made it clear he wanted no calls or interruptions of any kind. He ordered a good meal and ate it slowly, drinking selectively.

He had a problem of particular perplexity, Carol. They had been married for almost a year. Professionally, things could not be better. Carol had recently undertaken a tremendously successful coast-to-coast concert tour. She was aflame with the excitement of having a live audience again. Every appearance was not an entertainment so much as a love affair with her audience. Her career was surpassing even the most optimistic expectations. Friedlander had astronomical offers from all over the world.

It was on a personal level that Friedlander sought clarity in his mind. For the past nine months Carol had been having affairs with a variety of young men. In the supremely competitive world in which he operated, Fried-

lander had to maintain an information network. Inevitably there were informers who hastened to curry favour.

At first, he found it impossible to believe. Carol was still a passionate and considerate bed companion. Only last night they had shared an erotic adventure which he still recalled with sensual pleasure, yet he knew that she had been unfaithful to him only a week ago. He had decided that, tonight, he would make up his mind about his future attitude toward his wayward but adorable wife.

At first, her infidelities injured him more than he would have thought possible. He went through the classic pattern of a husband betrayed—his ego was wounded, his sensibility outraged. Somehow, in spite of all his experience with women, he had equated Carol with out-of-date virtues . . . innocence, fidelity, trust. Her blatant promiscuousness shattered him.

He weighed all the aspects of the situation. He loved Carol, in a mature way. He wanted her sexually and as a unique personality. He had respect for her talent. Her unfaithfulness wounded him. But he had to admit that the pain was no longer so fierce. He had established that Carol's sexual transgressions had no permanence. They were almost always single encounters. She used their bodies and threw them aside. Friedlander knew without any doubt that Carol still loved him. She was attentive to his whims and after every separation greeted him with a warmth which he found moving and touching.

Another fact which he confronted honestly, was that Carol's sexual hunger (feigned though it seemed to be) was proving too much for a man of his years.

Let's face it, he thought. Her affairs take some of the pressure off me. I'm not young and rampant around the clock any more. Yet at the same time he obtained enormous satisfaction from having such a glamorous and talented woman as his wife.

He sat motionless, exploring his emotions, and came to a decision. He would tolerate her infidelities. Carol was a complex personality. He had no idea what her sexual motivations were. The basic facts were these: he enjoyed

her as a wife; she was at his disposal, sexually, whenever he wanted her; her sexual adventures were of the most superficial kind . . . he saw no threat to their marriage. No, on balance, and as show business marriages went, his marriage was going well. He was a man of the world, and he would condone her excursions into the arms of bewildered young men.

Having made the decision, Friedlander felt a glow of well-being. He had another brandy, lit a cigar, left the club and took a taxi home. He entered the apartment building, nodded to the security guard and went up in the elevator. It was 12.30 a.m. Carol had been to see some television people that evening, in preparation for an appearance as a guest artist next week. She had arranged to meet him at the apartment sometime after midnight.

Friedlander put his key in the lock and opened the door. On his way home he had bought the early edition of the morning paper. He scanned the headlines as he walked into the apartment and closed the door behind him. Involved in the newspaper, he walked absent-mindedly to the liquor cabinet and poured himself a Scotch. He sat in his favourite chair. As he raised his drink he heard a sound which froze him. There were noises coming from the master bedroom. And they had a frighteningly familiar ring.

Friedlander felt cold rage. He put down the drink and walked slowly across the thick carpet to the bedroom. He pushed the half-open door and it swung wide. Carol was writhing on the bed, her hair flying, her legs kicking spasmodically, Friedlander saw a man, heaving and floundering over Carol's body.

A red blur settled over Friedlander's vision. He gave a cry of rage, seized the man, and flung him to the floor. He recognised him as one of the young public relations men of the television company Carol had been to. The pattern as before, thought Friedlander. The young man was in a state of shock. He picked up his clothes and ran for the door.

Friedlander ignored him, and with an effort controlled

his anger. He looked at his wife. Illogically, she had pulled up the bedcovers to her neck and was staring at him. Her expression was an unexpected combination of apprehension and warmth. A child who knew she was about to be chastised for having been naughty.

Words flew through Friedlander's mind. But the time for words was past. This blatant infidelity in his own bed was something he could not, and would not accept. He turned his back on Carol and walked out of the apartment. He was filled with inflexible anger and chilling contempt. He moved into his club and the next day took the initial steps for a divorce.

After the two men had left, Carol lay in bed, bewildered. Why had Paul walked out on her in such cold fury? That was not the way he was supposed to behave. Carol began to cry. The seizure of unhappiness went on and on, until her throat was sore and her chest ached from the racking sobs. She got out of bed and sat at her dressing-table. Her image in the mirror seemed to wrench her back to reality.

What's wrong with me? she thought. Her eyes filled with fear. Why do I do these things? I love Paul, she thought desperately. I don't want to hurt him. I don't even enjoy the other men. Why did I bring that young fool here tonight when I knew that Paul was coming home?

She gave a moan of despair. I'm going mad, she thought. She covered her eyes to shut out the sight of her contemptible self.

CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS

Carol Kaye, as I have called her, came to see me the following day. She thought she was losing her reason. Her husband, whom she treasured above everything in the world, had left her.

The case of Carol Kaye is an unusually complex one, representing a dual problem, or what could perhaps be described as two overlapping problems.

She suffered from a pronounced father fixation. She had

lost her father while still very young. But she was determined to have a father.

Her emotional attitudes were complicated by another influence—a driving, hyper-ambitious mother who was impelled to sublimate her own frustrated desire for a successful career in show business in the success of her daughter.

Carol had the most affectionate memories of her father from the time when he doted over her as a little girl. Then his sudden accidental death removed him dramatically from her life. Over the years he became exalted in her memory. Her concept of a father—having been idealised through all the years of being without a father—was a man who loved her so much that he would forgive her anything, no matter what she might do. Her father would punish her, no doubt, out of deep love and concern. But a 'father', to Carol, was a man it was impossible to alienate.

In her relationships with the opposite sex, she sought a father primarily and a lover only secondarily.

Typically, Carol chose as her father-figure a man who was wealthy—after all, a father is expected to be the provider. She also chose someone who genuinely appealed to her because of his warmth, understanding and masculine strength. It is so much easier to choose an ideal father than to be born to one!

Carol sought and found her father-figure in Paul, who provided for her and loved her. In return, Carol gave herself to her 'father', her most important gift being her sexuality. Her conscious mind would never admit that her husband was taking the place of her father, but her subconscious mind was extremely aware of this substitution. Because of the father concept so deeply imbedded in her, Carol could not reach an orgasm during sex with her 'father'. She would do everything she could to please, but she could not receive sexual gratification from him because that would be wrong . . . that was her rationale. She would be giving him pleasure, but there would be no mutual sexual experience. Because of this deep division in the

sexual relationship with her husband, Carol never reached sexual fulfilment with him (although she acted the passionate wife with skill).

She sought and found sexual gratification by casual encounters with young men to whom she would have been attracted if her attitude were not warped by the father fixation.

In a normal relationship with these young men her attitude would have been coloured, and her emotions deepened, by romance. But all her romantic notions were already focused upon her 'father'. All the young men were left with was lust. As the relationship had no depth, as far as Carol was concerned, she felt no sense of loss. She satisfied her passion and instantly forgot about whoever she had used as the means of achieving this release.

Carol's behaviour became destructive, however, because of her irresistible need to prove that her 'father' loved her. She was subconsciously impelled to set the stage for her 'father' to find her in bed with her lover. The way Carol had written the script for this melodrama, 'father' would come home, find her being naughty with her lover, chastise her sternly, then forgive her everything.

In real life the story had an unhappy ending. 'Father' felt no forgiveness, only outrage: Carol was left alone without a father-figure—without a lover. She was completely isolated and would laboriously have to piece together another pattern of relationships—which would inevitably end in the same disastrous manner.

The only way for a girl with Carol's problem to have a successful marriage would be if her husband tolerated, even encouraged, her liaisons with younger men. But even this situation would be doomed to eventual catastrophe, for with her husband constantly forgiving her, this type of person would come to the conclusion he didn't love her, because he didn't care enough about her to stop the misbehaviour.

Carol's obsessive need for a father was poised against an emotional requirement instilled in her by her mother's strong influence—the need for public acclamation.

Carol's mother forced her to seize every opportunity in show business. She bulldozed a path for her. In moments of disillusionment with her mother, such as when her mother's insensitivity embarassed her at the audition, Carol would seek refuge in fantasy. She would imagine that her mother was not her real mother at all. She would conjure up mental pictures of her father—and substitute herself in the role of his wife.

Because of Carol's talent, her career in show business flourished and she found herself in a situation where her audience provided her with a heady source of uncritical love. Every appearance before an audience was as stimulating and exhilarating as a dose of heroin to an addict. But, in the pattern so typical of show business, when Carol came off stage she was incomplete. No individual male could provide the concentration of emotion focused on her by an adoring audience.

Many great personalities of the stage have suffered from this flaw. A famous black-face singer, one of the most acclaimed entertainers in the history of American show business, fell into this category. At the age of eleven he ran away from his stern father, an Orthodox Rabbi, and sought from an audience the warmth of love he had never received from his parents. Although he lived a long life, and an eminently successful one on stage, his biographers agree that offstage his life was empty and incomplete.

I was able to reduce the intensity of Carol's suffering by arresting the self-destruction which compelled her to be caught in the act of infidelity. But she repeated the pattern of her emotional requirements and married again—three times more, up to now.

Cases such as these are extremely difficult to treat, as the patient is always reluctant to recognise that she is seeking a father substitute.

Another complication is that such patients are inclined to seize upon the psychologist as a substitute father-figure. He is tailor-made for the part, is sympathetic and understands their problem.

The 'Carol Kayes' of this world have great triumphs and satisfactions in their lives. Although they provide millions of people with pleasure and entertainment, they personally have to endure perpetual torment.

8: Scrooge Without Christmas

Adam Constant pushed through the front door, manipulating the handle with his elbow. His hands were full of parcels. It was Christmas 1890 and he had been shopping.

Constant was a skilled artisan and his wife was a nurse. They lived in a small house with little rent to pay. Their joint incomes amounted to a sizeable sum, considering their level of society. As he went into the house he saw his six-year-old son, Adrian.

"Hello, Daddy," said the boy.

"Hello, Adrian." Constant unloaded the parcels on to the table in the hallway. They were all shapes and sizes.

"Where's your mother?" he asked.

"She hasn't come back yet," said Adrian.

Constant nodded, smiling. He knew where she was. She would be on a buying spree, as he had been. He and Florence enjoyed buying each other gifts. They had given each other delightful surprises over the years.

Adam put a pot of coffee on the stove and started packaging his gifts. He felt that the way a gift was presented was important. When he had finished, he took the parcels to the lounge where the Christmas tree was standing. He added his parcels to the others already there and inspected the pile. Florence had added new presents since he'd last looked. Adam felt the excitement of anticipation.

"When will it be Christmas, Daddy?" asked Adrian, a serious little boy with brown eyes.

"Tomorrow, my boy, tomorrow," said Adam, good-naturedly. "That's the day we open all the presents."

"Will there be a present for me, Daddy?" asked the boy.

"Of course," said Adam absent-mindedly. "Of course there'll be a present for you."

Adrian stood looking at the Christmas tree, and the mound of presents, wrapped in gay paper. He remembered the last gift he had received. It was on his birthday, last April. A miniature horse and carriage. He still had it. He stood there, wondering which presents were his.

On Christmas morning, Adam, Florence and Adrian were up early around the Christmas tree. Florence, on her knees, wearing her dressing-gown, grabbed a parcel with her name on it and opened it. It was a jewellery set, ear-rings and matching choker. She gave a gasp of delight and held the pieces up to examine them.

"They're beautiful, darling," she said, and kissed her husband. He smiled and finished opening one of his parcels.

"Flo," he shouted loudly. "These things cost a fortune! You shouldn't have." He held a platignum cigar-cutter.

"Don't worry, I got it second-hand, it was a bargain," she said gaily, reaching for another parcel.

"Daddy," said Adrian poking around the pile of parcels, "which ones are mine?"

"Oh, of course," said Adam. He searched and found a box with Adrian's name on it. "This is for you," he said and handed it to the boy.

Adrian slowly unwrapped the parced. He took off the paper and uncovered a cardboard box. He removed the lid. Inside was a pop-gun. By pulling the trigger, a cork popped out of the barrel. The cork was attached with a string so that it couldn't be lost. He fired it and listened to the noise. Then he put it down because it didn't interest him and went to see his other presents.

His father was trying on an overcoat. It fitted him perfectly.

"I had it altered especially," said Flo. She was admiring a mirror her husband had given her.

Adrian nudged his father's elbow as soon as he was able to break into the laughter and the fuss of opening parcels.

"Where are the other presents, Daddy?" he said.

Adam looked at him, trying to bring his attention to his son.

"Other presents? There aren't other presents, Adrian, now run along and play."

Adrian stood very still. His only present! Why only one present when his mother and father were giving each other dozens? He felt as though his parents had shut him out of their Christmas. He picked up the pop-gun and walked away.

Behind him he heard his mother say: "You know, Adam, perhaps we should have given him something else."

"What for?" asked Adam with conviction. "Adrian doesn't understand the value of things."

Adrian went outside. His father had said that he didn't understand values. That must mean that the pop-gun father had given him had no value. He let it drop from his fingers on to the path. Adrian went to the far end of the back yard, found a piece of wood and pretended it was a battleship.

It was a freezing cold day with drizzle. Adrian stamped his feet to make them warm, then trudged through the snow. He rounded the corner before his home and in anticipation of the warmth, he ran. As he reached the front door he burst into coughing. His chest had felt painful all day and he had an increasing number of coughing fits. He flung the door open and ran inside, eager to escape the cold. He was coughing incessantly . . . a hoarse, barking cough, which seemed to be tearing his lungs.

His parents were home and Adrian was astounded by the attention he received. His mother took his temperature and immediately sent for the doctor. His father enquired gently when the cough had first started. Adrian became inordinately proud of his cough and the attention it attracted. His mother put him to bed saying he had bronchitis and would have to stay home for a few days. A few hours later the doctor arrived and confirmed his mother's diagnosis.

"Fortunately these pills work wonders," the doctor told Florence outside Adrian's bedroom. "See that he takes

them regularly and he should be his normal self quite soon."

Adrian lay in bed not wanting to be his normal self. This way was far more satisfactory. He coughed, experimentally, to make sure the cough was still there. It was. It made a harsh, racking sound. At once, his mother appeared and fussed over him. That evening Adrian had several bad coughing fits. His parents rushed in to see how he was. Several times Adrian exaggerated his discomfort, coughing harshly and contorting his face. His parents didn't notice this deception and he felt quite proud . . .

When he woke the next morning, the cough was noticeably less severe. Adrian was disappointed. He tried to cough the way he had been able to but he couldn't.

"He's on the mend," said his mother, as his father left for work. "I *was* going to stay home and look after him but it's not necessary now."

"We'd better not risk it," said Adam. "Stay home until lunch time and see how he is then."

By midday Adrian's cough had improved so much that his mother decided to leave him for the afternoon. Adrian lay in bed thinking that things were back to normal. He wished he could get a cough once a week. What a difference that would make!

When Adrian left school his father had him apprenticed as an artisan in the building trade. It was hard work, in conditions which were often unpleasant. Midway through his apprenticeship, Adrian decided that he wasn't going to spend the rest of his life in humble work. He would save every penny, and instead of being a worker he would become an employer . . . like the man who came to the building site once or twice a week, smoking a cigar, looked around, then drove away in a new carriage.

Adrian opened a savings account and every penny he could spare he deposited each day. He wore his clothes until they were rags. Every night he spent in his room reading books on the technical side of building. He wasn't interested in girls and he was not prepared to waste money on any form of entertainment.

When Adrian was in his early twenties his father became seriously ill. Within a week he died. Shocked by the unexpected tragedy, his mother lost all her vivacity and irresponsibility and became a crabby, middle-aged woman with no interests outside her work. Adrian decided he had enough money saved to set himself up in business. His studies had led him to the conclusion that house decoration seemed profitable. With careful management he soon became a success. He signed a contract with the local municipality and made a fair profit. Then he went further afield, and obtained major contracts with civic authorities. Within five years he was active in the retail trade, opening several paint stores.

Adrian became very wealthy and married a girl whose father was a city councillor. She was a plain girl, but she was impressed by Adrian's drive and his success. She had no reservations about his background and lack of education. She was a tall girl, at five-foot-nine, towering five inches over Adrian.

As he walked her down the wedding aisle, Adrian looked up at his bride. A fine figure of a woman. I may be a small man physically, he thought, but I'm building a huge empire. He saw his marriage as a route to influence. And anyway, he needed someone to tend to his home.

Adrian permitted a honeymoon of one day in the city's main hotel.

"It would be wasteful to go away for any length of time," he persuaded Laura. "It's in our best interest to live sparingly and build our reserves."

Adrian acquired a modest house in a state of disrepair. He purchased it for a token sum by promising the owner a special discount on his future business. Laura, with the enthusiasm of a young bride, set about improving the house. She soon discovered her husband's steely reluctance to spend money. Even her household budget was at an absolute minimum.

"Save now and enjoy the future," said Adrian. He persuaded Laura to dream ahead and endure the dreary

present. It took Laura some time to realise that the rosy future would never come. The more money Adrian made, the more careful he became.

Laura gave Adrian four children in as many years. The first child was a boy, Richard. In the ensuing years—Ellen, Timothy and Susan. Although the family ate and had enough clothing, Adrian's miserliness imposed spartan values on every aspect of their existence. Richard's clothes were passed on to Timothy, patched and repaired until threadbare. Ellen's clothes were transferred to the youngest, Susan.

Adrian bought one newspaper a week. When he had read it, it was passed through the family. When they had finished, it was cut up, and used as toilet paper (threaded on to string). He refused permission for the children to keep pets. Animals eat, he would say, and food costs money.

Because Adrian had never permitted himself the luxury of a visit to the music hall he saw no reason why his wife or children should be different. His family stayed at home, reading (by membership of the public library). As the years passed Adrian became richer and more powerful. He also became more miserly, cantankerous, arrogant and overbearing. His children wore hang-dog looks from being constantly berated for their shortcomings and the cost to him of their very existence.

When Adrian's eldest son, Richard, was twenty, he graduated from technical college. He came home with important news. Richard was a young man with a philosophical mind. He had inherited his father's technical skills with none of his irascibility. He was better armed than his brother and sisters against his father's lack of reasonableness. Dinner was usually a sombre occasion and tonight was no exception. Very little was said, the children knew that light-hearted chatter would be met by a grim response from their father. He didn't believe in talk, unless there was something worthwhile to be said.

Finally, Richard made his announcement.

"Father," he said, "there's something I must tell you."

Adrian put down his teacup and looked challengingly at his son.

"Well, out with it."

"I've met the girl I'm going to marry."

Susan, who was fifteen, let out a squeak of excitement and Laura beamed from the kitchen doorway.

"Rubbish," said Adrian and returned to his tea. "You're too young to think of marriage and you'll have to get some money together first."

"I don't mean right away, Dad," said Richard, smiling. His father had reacted exactly as expected. "I've been seeing Helen for nearly a year and I'm sure we'll get married sooner or later. I thought I should let you know."

Adrian returned his attention to Richard. This was obviously serious. "D'you mean you've been seeing a girl for a year without consulting me?"

"Dad, you know how you are about girl friends. You always disapprove. I thought I'd get to know her really well before bringing her home."

"Don't bother," said Adrian. "She's just a fortune-hunter. A useless snip of a girl."

Richard steeled himself. "She's not like that at all, Dad, you'd like her."

Adrian stood, irritability and intolerance on his face. "You're not marrying her. Is that clear?"

Richard glared at his father. He got up from the table, ran outside and walked off. He *would* marry Helen no matter what his father said. The subject was never broached again. It never occurred to Adrian that his children could disobey him. He assumed that Richard had broken off the relationship. A year later, Richard, at the dinner table announced his plans.

"You remember I told you father, about getting married?" he said quietly.

His father looked up vaguely, trying to remember. Then his eyes focused in remembered disapproval.

"That nonsense was a year ago."

"It's not nonsense," said Richard. "Helen and I want to get married in April."

"What!" Adrian's face was mottling with rage. At forty-eight, his hair was flecked with white and his eyes reflected the power he was used to. "You disobeyed me!" He could not believe it. He looked at his son with ferocity. "You will end this affair tomorrow. You will see no more of this girl, whoever she is. She's probably some common shop girl who thinks if she hooks you she'll *hook* my money."

"So you don't approve," said Richard quietly.

"I most certainly don't," said Adrian, but his curiosity was aroused. "You might have the courtesy to tell your family what sort of person you've been planning to live with."

Richard ignored the innuendo. "She's twenty. Her name is Patterson. Her parents live abroad. He's an engineer. She's an art student."

"Art student!" Adrian made it sound like an obscenity. His face, marked by a lifetime's irascibility, looked even uglier in rage.

"I've told you you can't marry her and that's that! I'll settle on the right girl for you, someone suitable."

"With money, you mean," said Richard daringly.

"That's right, you know-all," said Adrian. "Money counts. It's the only thing in the world of importance and I'm not going to throw my hard-earned cash away on you."

Richard confronted his father across the table. Timothy, Ellen and Susan looked down, too afraid to do more than sneak an occasional glance. It was unheard-of that father should be defied. Laura's face reflected her torn allegiance.

"I'm over twenty-one," said Richard. "I can do what I like. I've tried to do things the right way. I asked your permission and you refused. I've come to you again and you still refuse." A look of desperation was on his face. "Please, Dad, won't you even meet her? You might change your mind."

"I'll never change my mind," said Adrian coldly. "You marry this girl and as far as I'm concerned you'll be dead. Do you hear me? Dead!"

There was a long silence, father and son in total hostility. Then Richard turned away.

The next day Richard moved out of the house. He found a job with a building firm and rented a small house. Three months later he and Helen were married. His father did not attend the ceremony and did not send a gift. Richard's mother sent a kind note, without Adrian's knowledge. Adrian refused, from that moment, to mention Richard's name.

A year later, Ellen was twenty. She also came to her father to tell him that she had fallen in love. If Ellen had hoped that her father's attitude would be more understanding than it had been with Richard, she was mistaken. Even though he had never seen Ellen's young man, Adrian refused approval. *He* would choose a husband for his daughter, he said, in his own good time.

As her brother had done, Ellen persisted with the liaison. When she was twenty-one, she approached her father again to ask his blessing on her marriage.

"Like that, is it?" said Adrian. "Marriage without my permission... You're not pregnant, are you?"

"No, father," said Ellen.

Meanwhile, Richard proved adept at his job. He progressed swiftly. After some years he became senior inspector for a large firm. His job entailed visits to building sites throughout the country. It was strenuous work and he was exposed to bad weather during most of the year.

When Richard was thirty-five, he became ill. His wife, Helen, was alarmed to see his once-muscular physique wasting. A specialist was certain that Richard's condition was deteriorating by working out of doors in varying climates.

"I'm convinced he can recover," he told Helen. "But he'll have to leave his job and take a six-month holiday, preferably somewhere in the sun."

"Six months!" said Helen.

"It's either that, or risk a condition which could be fatal," said the specialist.

Helen and Richard discussed their future that night. Richard had earned well for a long time, but had lived up to his income. Also, he had invested unwisely on occasions. They had no financial cushion whatsoever.

"Be realistic, darling," said Richard. "I can't afford to give up my job. We're financially committed to the hilt. Maybe in six months, I'll be able to arrange another job, perhaps take a drop in income. But I can't stop work now. In any case, with the warmer weather coming, perhaps I'll improve." He looked doubtful. He'd lost thirty pounds in the past three months.

Helen realised that her husband was right. They couldn't afford to lose his salary cheque. In desperation, a possibility occurred to her. She did not dare mention it to Richard, but she was determined to approach Richard's father. He could not be heartless enough to refuse help under these circumstances. Helen left the next day to see Adrian. Richard was away at a site so he would not miss her.

It was a long train journey to the city in which Adrian lived. As soon as she arrived Helen went to a phone booth and looked up the number: Adrian Constant Enterprises... She dialled and asked for Mr Constant. A secretary answered and asked her name. "Mrs Richard Constant." A few seconds later she was put through to Constant.

"Yes," he said briskly.

"I'm Richard's wife, Mr Constant," she said.

"I realise that," he said. "The wife I've never seen."

"Can I meet you, please, Mr Constant," she said.

"What do you want? I suppose it's money," said Adrian.

His brutality made Helen speechless for a moment.

"Well, is it?" The voice was a rasp.

"Please, Mr Constant, it's Richard... He's not well, he's desperately ill... He needs help... a loan... we'll pay it back soon, I promise you." Helen had the fear that her father-in-law would slam the 'phone down and in her eagerness she was almost incoherent.

There was a slight pause. "You are fourteen years too

late with your request, Mrs Constant," Adrian said, emphasising the 'Mrs.' "I told Richard that when he married you. As far as I'm concerned Richard is dead." Helen stood holding the telephone then looked into the mouthpiece with disbelief. She replaced it in its cradle and began to weep.

She returned home knowing she could never tell Richard of her attempt to obtain help. He would never forgive her.

Richard kept on working. Nine months later he was dead.

The day after she buried her husband, Helen sent Adrian a letter. It said:

"Adrian Constant:

My husband lies in his grave. He was a good man.

You could have given him life.

You condemned you own son to death.

Helen Constant."

When Adrian received the letter he re-read it several times. Then he placed it in a drawer, reserved for personal papers. He sat for a few moments, head in hands, thinking back.

No, he decided, he would do the same again if need be. He had made a firm decision when Richard married against his wishes. A decision could not be gone back upon. The woman on the telephone had been thoroughly unconvincing. Her letter was an effrontery.

But he kept the letter.

Adrian, now sixty-two, was at the dinner table when he began to wheeze and heave for breath. His wife and his daughter Susan, who lived at home and served as housekeeper to her parents, leaped to his side. Laura undid his tie and Susan flapped a napkin in his face. His features were distended from the effort to breathe. Adrian collapsed on to the floor, looking frail and old in his shiny suit.

Laura rushed to phone the doctor, but by the time he arrived the attack was over. Adrian sat silently in the lounge, his features drawn.

The doctor examined him thoroughly. Finally, he

nodded. He'd been treating the family for years and knew their medical histories.

"You have asthma, Adrian," said the doctor. "You've never had anything like this before, have you?"

"Never," said Adrian.

"Strange," said the doctor. "Asthma very seldom occurs so late in life."

"What is asthma?" said Adrian.

"Well," said the doctor, "we're still not sure what causes it, but physically its a constriction of the tubes in the lung, making it difficult to breathe the proper quota of air. As to the question of what brings on an attack, there are many different theories."

The doctor brought Adrian one of the new anti-asthma sprays with instructions on how to use it.

After he had gone, Adrian went to bed. "It's nothing to get upset about," he assured Laura and Susan. "Just another sign of old age."

But as he lay in bed, he had to admit that he had been terrified. He prayed fervently that the asthma would never recur.

It did. The attacks came every two or three weeks, sometimes so severely that he became unconscious. He began using the spray the doctor had given him whenever he suspected an attack might be imminent. He bought every brand of pill and medicine that might cure him—nothing helped.

Timothy, Adrian's younger son, had always wanted to be a chemist. Adrian told him that *his* money could be put to better use than to throw it away establishing his son in a business. Undaunted, Timothy worked, saved and finally scraped together enough money to start his own pharmacy.

After five years of trading, there was an unexpected development. Timothy needed money. He approached his father for financial aid.

"What is it this time, Tim?" asked his father, peering suspiciously at him.

"I suppose you've heard about the town-planning scheme," said Timothy.

"Of course," said Adrian.

"Well," said Timothy, "you know that my shop is not situated in the best part of town. In fact it's in an area which is deteriorating every day."

"Really," said Adrian acidly, "you didn't choose a very wise site, did you?"

Timothy could have reminded his father that the shop was situated where it was, due to his father's refusal to lend him enough money for decent premises. But this was not time for recriminations. He needed the old man's help.

"Anyway, Dad," he said firmly, "I've got the chance of a lifetime to make good. In the new town-planning scheme I'm eligible for a site in the better part of town. If I can get in, I'll be set for life."

"How much money do you need?" said Adrian.

"A thousand pounds," said Timothy, watching his father to assess his reaction.

"That's a lot of money," said Adrian.

"It's very little when you consider the possible earnings," said Timothy, determined not to be on the defensive. "All I need is a loan of a thousand pounds so that I can get a site. I'll be able to repay you, with interest, in a few months," said Timothy.

"I can't say I'm impressed," said Adrian glancing at the clock on his desk.

"But, Dad," said Timothy, leaning forward earnestly. "If you won't lend me the money, we can do it another way. All I need is your signature . . . a guarantee, for a few months, at the bank."

"I'll think about it," said Adrian. "Now excuse me, but I have someone else coming in shortly. You've used enough of my time."

He ushered his son out, then returned to his desk. He sat deep in thought. A thousand pounds! That was a lot of money.

He thought of *his* youth. No one had ever given a thousand pounds to help him. No one had ever given *him*

anything. Timothy expected him to hand over a thousand pounds to solve his problems. Why should he? Let Timothy fight for himself as he had done.

Adrian had made his decision.

Adrian Constant's asthma attacks became more frequent, and more severe as the years passed. But he proved to have exceptional physical resources.

His wife, Laura, died of influenza when he was seventy-five. His eldest daughter, Ellen, still estranged from him, died at fifty-two. Finally Timothy passed away. In his eighties, Adrian had only his youngest daughter, Susan, to tend to him. It was a master-servant relationship and he was tyrannical.

His family gone, his contemporaries dead, his business self-sufficient, Adrian became totally preoccupied with his asthma. It plagued him day and night. It intensified until he lost consciousness then relaxed and permitted him moments of normal respiration.

Adrian Constant was arrogant, ruthless, selfish, contemptuous of weakness in others, but he was also a fighter. He had battled all his life, giving no quarter and expecting none. Now his enemy was asthma and he fought it with all the dwindling strength at his command.

When Adrian had turned eighty-eight (still actively supervising his affairs) a new doctor came to town. He was immediately consulted by Adrian.

"You're the youngest doctor here," said Constant. "So you must be nearer to new developments. The stick-in-the-muds we've had for years have no idea. Tell me how to lick this asthma of mine and money is no object." As he spoke, Constant wheezed dreadfully.

"You say you never had asthma until you were in your sixties?"

"That's right. I didn't know such a thing existed."

"It seems obvious that your asthma is psychosomatic, in other words, that it's brought on mentally," said the doctor. "I suggest you consult a psychiatrist. I know of one who recently cured a chronic asthmatic by hypnotism."

CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS

Throughout his adult life Adrian Constant placed his trust only in his wealth. He came to me with the attitude that if he brandished money in sufficiently large quantities, I would be able to banish his asthma, magically.

He was an impossible patient. When I told him bluntly that money could not help him, he offered me double the amount. When I attempted to probe into his emotional background he lost his temper and stormed out of my rooms declaring that he was not going to "sit and listen to rubbish". But every time his asthmatic attacks became worse, he came back.

There was nothing obscure about Constant's case. He protested his innocence so aggressively, it became obvious he had much on his conscience.

As our discussions explored the possibility that he might have been at fault in his treatment of his family, Constant would consistently erupt into indignant rage and walk out. But he kept returning, and slowly began to face up to his guilt.

Adrian Constant was raised in an environment in which his mother and father were constantly gratifying each other with gifts. They gave to each other obsessively, showering presents on each other like spoiled children. Adrian was excluded from this circle of gratification. His father stated that Adrian did not understand value. In his rejection, Adrian focused on the word 'value'. The only thing of value was money, he decided, and he applied all his energy to the pursuit and retention of it.

By the time Constant had become an adult, his greed for money was obsessional. To Adrian, money represented power. Power in his hands proved to be dangerous—even though he used money negatively, by withholding it.

Being an extremely short man, Adrian also suffered from what is commonly known as a 'Napoleon complex'—

the urge to surpass his fellow men in order to compensate for his lack of height. For this reason, too, Adrian married a girl much taller than he.

Constant had the conviction that no one, not even his parents, had really cared for him. He felt that if his parents did not love him no one could—not even his children. He was certain that they only respected him for his money. In this way he justified withholding help from his family. He ruthlessly isolated his children when they married against his wishes. He cruelly refused to aid his eldest son in his crisis.

But guilt had been building up subconsciously throughout the years.

The death of his son after he had figuratively deemed him dead was the catalyst which finally brought retribution. Within weeks, Constant was stricken by asthma.

A key experience in Constant's early life had been his attack of bronchitis. His parents had been so obsessed with each other they barely noticed Adrian. He was taken for granted. But when he developed bronchitis they became alarmed and focused their attention upon him. This was so unusual that Adrian was overwhelmed. His parents fussed over him, pampered him and openly worried about him. To receive attention, which he equated with love, he merely had to cough.

Many years later, when Constant's burden of guilt became too much for him, he had to expiate his guilt—to balance the scales. Hence the asthma.

In Constant's subconscious mind there was a link between bronchitis—a respiratory affliction—and attention, which he equated with love and forgiveness. With his asthmatic seizures, Adrian Constant was punishing himself for his sins and at the same time seeking absolution.

When Constant came to see me he was eighty-eight—a very old dog, indeed, to learn new tricks. The only way we could hope to improve his condition was by enabling him to confront his guilt. If he could accept his guilt and shoulder responsibility for what he had done, a cure could be achieved. But Constant was too old for this. The best

we could hope for was a compromise. I tried to bring about a character change.

Encouraged by me, Adrian Constant began to develop a new view of himself. He saw himself as a difficult old codger—a lovable old tyrant.

In his first discussions with me he was hyper-sensitive to the merest suggestion of criticism. Then, gradually, he mellowed and began to show flashes of self-deprecating humour.

Constant started to act his new role with enjoyment. He actually began to revel in criticism. He came a 'character' —a crusty old curmudgeon. This behavioural device enabled him to expiate some of his guilt, while retaining his self-respect. He was now able to cope with the asthma.

But Adrian Constant could not undo the harm he had done in his lifetime, devastating the lives of his children because of his own obsessions—inculcated by his own parents' selfish and thoughtless behaviour.

9: What About Sammy IV?

Sammy Venables held the recorder carefully, his fingers adjusted as his father had taught him. He heard the notes of the spinet as his mother began to play. He blew and the pure music filled the room.

His father, Samuel Venables II, watched with approval. Sammy was only eight, but his musical ability had been evident since he was three. Now, as Sammy and his mother played mediaeval instruments, Samuel II conjured in his mind with the anachronistic mood of a more leisurely era. Samuel Venables loved the magic of the classics.

The world was preoccupied with change, he thought. Desperately reacting against the materialistic tensions of their lives, people sought solace in strange adaptations of ancient Eastern religions. He had read that very day of a philosopher who thought business executives could gain peace of mind by the judicious use of Oriental pseudo-religious phrases, repeated over and over, in order to 'tune in to the infinite'.

He personally had always found contemplative peace and an awareness of the infinite through classical music. His method had stood the test of centuries. Bach, to him, contained all the harmonies of the universe.

The charming composition, with the simple melody, came to an end.

Samuel strode across the huge lounge. "Very good indeed, my boy," he said, and clapped Sammy on the shoulder. "You were a trifle insecure in the coda, but a little practice will rectify that." He looked proudly at his son, standing erect in his miniature suit, his blond hair neatly brushed. "It won't be long before you're a real man." He repeated the phrase: "A real man."

Dorothy Venables rose from the spinet, an impressive woman with a fine head of hair. But even she looked small

next to her powerful husband. Samuel Venables was heavily built, beefy with a florid complexion. She had always found it intriguing that someone as aggressively masculine as her husband should have such profound feeling for serious music. Although he was a mediocre musician himself, he had an astonishing grasp of musical theory, and an insatiable appetite for music. Their lives were filled with the majesty of symphonies.

Samuel believed that the classics created vibrations which were beneficial to their home.

"Sammy is coming along very well," she said. "Run along, dear," she added, to Sammy. "You'd better go to your room." Sammy disappeared dutifully.

Dorothy turned to her husband. "You know, darling, I feel that Sammy's heart isn't in his music. He lacks enthusiasm. Don't you think we're pushing him too hard? After all, he's only a baby."

"Nonsense," said Venables. "Children of that age have to be given a direction, and disciplined to follow it."

"I suppose you're right," she said, and smiled. "What time is it?" He told her. "We're just in time to hear 'The Emperor'," she said and moved to turn on the set.

Samuel laughed. "Did you think I'd forgotten?"

Together, they sat entranced by the music.

Sammy Venables held the acoustic guitar across his thigh and struck the dramatic opening chords. As always, the vibration of the instrument gave him a thrill. The plangent sound filled the coffee bar with the drama of flamenco. He looked up from his concentration to see if Lana would make her entrance on cue. She did.

Lana, whom he'd met a month previously, was a student of Spanish dancing. The owner of the coffee bar knew their parents and was a frequent house guest. He had encouraged them to use his coffee shop—a students' den—as a place to flex their musical muscles.

This was the first time he and Lana had appeared in public, although they had often rehearsed together. Lana looked dramatic in the Spanish costume with the long,

whirling train and the high head-dress. She twirled on the platform before him, her heels rattling out a message of drama and passion in counterpoint to the rich chords he plucked from the guitar.

The music reached its climax and subsided. The crowd were cheering, whistling and stamping. Sammy stood up, grinning, and bowed. Lana acknowledged the applause and they walked off, hand in hand.

Tom, the owner, embraced them both. "Nice work," he said. "I think you're good enough to turn professional!"

Sammy smiled. "I still have a long time to wait, Tom."

"What do you mean?" said Tom earnestly. He was eager and full of enthusiasm. "Why don't you organise a pop group and play at weekends?"

"You know my father, Tom. He'd throw a cadenza. I'm sixteen now. Next year I go to Rome to continue my studies." He gave a resigned sigh. "It'll be years before I can turn professional."

"What rubbish!" said Tom. "Pop music can earn money and give you confidence. You'll become experienced at appearing in public. Why should it affect your classical studies?"

"It makes sense, Sammy," said Lana, as they moved toward their table.

"What's it to be?" said Tom. "And it's on the house."

They ordered and Tom moved off muttering about Sammy's musical folly.

"Seriously," said Lana. "Why don't you do as Tom says?"

"It's exactly what I *want* to do," said Sammy. "Unfortunately it's not what my father wants. You know what he's like."

"I didn't know he had such strong views," said Lana. "But then I've only met him once or twice." She paused, noticing a change in Sammy's mood. "Is anything wrong?" she asked.

"Not really," said Sammy, trying not to look dejected. "But I just thought . . . Dad's due home tomorrow. He's been in Jamaica for six weeks and he's expecting me to

meet him at the airport. My mother's away at the moment." He seized Lana's hand. "Will you do me a favour?"

"Yes, I think I probably would," said Lana, smiling.

"It's just that my old man can be a bit heavy, sometimes. How about coming to the airport with me for moral support?"

"Sure," said Lana. "I'd love to. If he's in a mood, I'll charm him out of it."

Later, Sammy gave Lana a lift on his scooter. He persuaded her to come to his home for a while and listen to some discs. He had the enormous house to himself until tomorrow. His father was abroad, his mother away, and his younger brother at boarding school. He and Lana had indulged in a lot of necking during the past weeks and they had reached a stage of intimate friendship.

Swigging their Cokes, they lounged on the carpet and Sammy played music he usually kept hidden. His father had forbidden him to bring pop music into the house since the day he'd found Sammy listening to the Rolling Stones.

"Junk!" his father had cried. "It pollutes the air with its hideous noises." He took the record and in his rage threw it out of Sammy's room. Sammy felt like laughing but he was also terrified of his father's rage. Samuel Venables was florid at the best of times. Now he was puce, a vein throbbing in his temple.

"I absolutely forbid you to play that sort of . . . of . . ." he fumbled for an epithet . . . "non-music in this house. Don't you understand, boy, it's everything that music shouldn't be?"

Sammy knew better than to argue with his father, particularly on the subject of music.

"Yes, Dad," he said. "I'm sorry."

Anyway, he thought, his father was not present now and he and Lana could enjoy the Stones without fear of interruption.

The frenzied music excited the two of them and when the record ended Sammy didn't bother to change it. He was kissing Lana and gradually he pushed his hand

towards her breast. Last time they'd necked, she'd let him feel her breast from the outside. Now, he was hoping she'd let him put his hand under her blouse. He felt the surge of her bosom and moved his hand so that it was fully on her breast. She moved against him and kissed him back.

That's a good omen, he thought. He fumbled his hand under the material of her dress. It was awkward at first, but Lana moved accommodatingly until he felt the smoothness and warmth of her flesh against his palm. He found her nipple and began to caress it. According to a sex book he'd read it should begin to stiffen but he didn't notice any dramatic difference.

Lana was breathing heavily, almost panting and so was he.

"Have you ever . . .?" she began.

"What's that?" he said. Her voice was muffled and he wasn't sure of her words.

"Have you ever done it?"

"No," he said. "Not yet."

"Do you want to?"

"Yes. With you."

"Here," she said. "Put you hand here."

She let out her breath in a long, low exhalation.

He had prepared himself for this eventuality. He had a condom in his pocket. Helping each other to find their way, they took off most of their clothes and made love, clumsily and uncertainly. Sammy was disappointed because it was over so quickly. He had reached a climax at once. A few minutes later he found he could do it again and this time it was much better.

Afterwards they lay for a long time, clasping each other affectionately. Sammy took Lana home, kissed her good night and rode back on his scooter. The wind was in his face and he began to whistle—one of the songs from the Jagger disc. He felt confident and cheerful. He had enjoyed sex for the first time. It was great.

He raided the refrigerator, then went to sleep.

At the airport the next evening, Sammy and Lana sat

together in the lounge. His father's plane was delayed for an hour.

"How long has he been away?" she asked.

"He's been in Jamaica for six weeks but I haven't seen him for nearly two months. He travels a lot."

"Don't you get on well?" she asked quietly.

"Oh, he's all right, I suppose." He shifted in his seat. "But he has definite ideas about everything and I don't always agree with him."

"He hates pop music. I suppose he's one of the Establishment. He hates long hair and all that . . ."

Lana looked at him with widening eyes. "Oh . . . I'm just beginning to understand. You mean . . . he hasn't seen you for two months?"

"That's right," said Sammy miserably. "And when he does, he'll blow his top. I just know it."

"Wow," said Lana. "No wonder you wanted some moral support." She giggled then felt remorseful. "I shouldn't laugh, but it *is* funny, you know. He leaves a short back and sides haircut behind and comes back to a guy with long hair wearing gear." She looked at Sammy admiringly. "I thought you always dressed like that."

"I never had the guts to try," said Sammy. "But with Dad away, I talked my mother into letting me wear what I wanted to. She seems to like me like this, but she knows that the old man will raise the roof."

"Oh well," said Lana, "it's time he realised that fashions have changed."

"Yeah," said Sammy, unconvinced.

Samuel Venables strode into the airport. He'd had a successful trip and had missed his family. He'd spoken to Dorothy long-distance the previous day and knew that Sammy would be there to meet him. As he headed into the concourse he glanced around him. No sign of Sammy. He felt a touch on his shoulder. "Hello, Dad." He looked around, and stopped in his tracks. Sammy was standing before him, but a different Sammy. Long hair—two months long—tight pants, wide lapels, screaming colours,

sideburns and the pathetic beginnings of a moustache. He had a girl with him. Her hair was hardly longer than his.

For a moment Samuel was speechless. "What the hell do you think you're doing, boy!" he bellowed. He saw Sammy pale and step back a pace. "Or should I call you girl," he said, with heavy sarcasm.

"Dad, please."

"You look like a bloody pansy. Or a girl. Are you out of your mind?" Samuel Venables felt his colour rise.

"Dad, let's not talk here," said Sammy imploringly, taking his father's arm to move him from the travellers who were turning towards the family scene.

"Hello, Mr Venables," said Lana brightly, trying to deflect the old man's wrath.

Venables glared at Lana, a pretty young thing holding on to Sammy's arm. "Did you have anything to do with this . . .?" He gestured insultingly at Sammy.

"If you mean did I have anything to do with his haircut or his clothes, the answer is no," said Lana spiritedly. "We only met a month ago. I think he looks wonderful." She gave Sammy's arm a squeeze.

"You may think it's wonderful, young woman, but I think it's disgusting." Venables turned to Sammy. "I gave you clear, very explicit orders, did I not?"

"Yes, sir," said Sammy, dejectedly.

"No long hair and no ridiculous clothing." He waved his hand at Sammy's outfit. "You look like a clown, like a . . . pop musician." He made the word 'pop' an insult.

"Come on," he said. "Let's get my luggage and go home. I don't want to be seen in public with you."

The teenagers followed silently as he forged through the crowd, his features ruddy with rage. Sammy's father drove home and dropped Lana off first. She stood in her driveway, waving at Sammy, as his father gunned the car back on to the road.

"Now tell me exactly what has been going on while I've been away," said Samuel Venables menacingly.

"There's nothing to tell, Dad," said Sammy.

"D'you call that ridiculous outfit nothing?" said his father. "How dare you go against me?"

"I don't want to ignore your wishes, Dad," said Sammy, desperately hoping his father would listen to him, for once.

His father snorted. "Then what is it?"

Sammy said, "It's the fashion to dress this way. Until now I've always been the odd man out. I think it's terrific. Everyone has a chance to be an individual."

Venables turned the car into the drive and brought it to a halt. He gave a sarcastic sniff. "Individuality! Don't you realise it's just another uniform. You all look alike, and no one can tell the boys from the girls." As he got out of the car he looked down at Sammy as he emerged from the other door. He spoke with emphasis: "Why can't you be a man? A *man*—not a long-haired, effeminate excuse for one!" He shook his head in exasperation and walked into the house.

Sammy leaned against the car, shaking. His hands quivered and his knees felt unsure. His father's words repeated in his mind... "Be a man... be a man... a man... man..."

He felt rebellious. He ran to his room, picked up his guitar and began to play. He did not pluck classical chords, but defiantly struck modern sounds out of the instrument. He did not care whether his father could hear or not. But Samuel Venables was lost in a Bach fugue, regaining his equilibrium.

"OPENING TONIGHT!" said the sign outside the theatre. "THE APES OF WRATH!" There was a queue around the block. In the box-office the cashier turned to the assistant manager. "At this rate, it's going to be a sell-out."

"It's what the youngsters want," he said. "Noise."

Backstage, the seven long-hairs who comprised the Apes of Wrath were listening to a pep talk from their manager, Brian Chalmers, a sharp-faced man in his thirties. "There's a queue a mile long," he said. "I reckon it's last week's

television that's done it. Now all I want you to do is go out there and do your thing. We'll give them plenty of volume and you can get the sex over."

He looked at Sammy Venables. "That reminds me, Sammy. This is the first time you've appeared with us. We know you're a great guitarist. That's why you're playing lead. But you're short of public exposure. When you get out there . . . no inhibitions. Those kids come here for sex. You've got to give it to them."

Sammy shuffled his feet. "I get you," he said.

"Yeah, sure you do—up here," Chalmers tapped his temple. "You're a clever lad and you know what I mean. But I want you to understand it there . . ." He pointed at Sammy's groin. The other musicians laughed.

"Don't worry Brian," said Dave, the leader. "Once he's out there he'll get the message from the kids."

Chalmers continued: "That isn't a guitar. To them, it's a prick. So throw it around."

"Cool it, Brian," said Dave. "He knows what it's about."

"All right, boys," said Chalmers. "It's over to you. There's some bookers here tonight. If we go big, we'll have a ticket going one way—Up!"

Over the sound system they heard the compère. The show had begun.

"Smoke?" said Dave, offering a cigarette to Sammy.

"Thanks," he said. They lit up.

"I know you've done a lot of gigs around town," said Dave. "But this is different."

"I'm sure it is," said Sammy, laughing nervously.

"Don't misunderstand me," said Dave. "You'll handle it. You might even thrive on it." He grinned. "But there are five thousand people out there. That's a lot of humanity." Dave paused. He was a tall youth. His hair was shoulder-length and he wore a full beard and a drooping moustache. The plethora of hair emphasised his coal-black eyes. "Johnny's car crash will keep him in hospital for at least six months," he said.

"I didn't know it was that bad," said Sammy.

"I've just spoken to the specialist. He says he might not

be able to play again. I want you to understand why I'm bothering with you." He gave a frank smile. "Believe me, this is a tough scene. Changes don't help. In the last couple of days of rehearsals, we know you pretty well. You know more about music than the rest of us put together. The big question is whether you'll register with the kids and I want to warn you that you're in for a new experience."

Dave turned away, then said as an after-thought: "We're having a party afterwards. Don't forget."

"No," said Sammy. "And thanks."

He began to make up. Chalmers, smoking nervously and talking incessantly, walked along the musicians at the long dressing-room mirror. He inspected Sammy's face and told him, once again, how to achieve effects. Chalmers was a perfectionist, Sammy realised. Perhaps that was why the Apes of Wrath was one of the rising groups.

Sammy inspected himself in the mirror. "I look calm," he thought. "It doesn't show."

Sammy was in a turmoil. Three days ago, Tom, the coffee-bar owner had phoned him.

"It's the opportunity of your life, Sammy," he said, his enthusiasm vibrating. Tom told him the lead guitarist of the Apes of Wrath had broken his arm in an accident and they needed a replacement. "We've all recommended you. You're the obvious choice. And anyway the leader says he's heard of you."

As he held the phone Sammy knew it was a decision which could turn his life upside down. He heard his father's voice in the lounge, and unconsciously Sammy lowered his own. "Look, I'll come right over and we can talk about it."

Tom introduced him to Dave. They moved across to the theatre and Sammy auditioned. Dave offered the job and Sammy accepted. It was made clear that if the local date went well, Sammy would join the group for the rest of the tour and might even become a permanent member.

That was three days ago. A lot had happened in those three days.

He had not been able to avoid the confrontation with his father. He didn't have to tell him, the news was in the next day's morning paper. A photograph of Sammy rehearsing with the group. He'd been concentrating on the music so much that he hadn't noticed the photographer in the theatre.

Sammy shuddered as he remembered the scene. His father went into a paroxysm of rage. He was sure that if his mother hadn't been there his father would have struck him. He'd called him a traitor and had given him an ultimatum: if Sammy played with the Apes of Wrath he would never be allowed in the house again. Sammy knew his father meant it. Venables did not make idle statements.

Now here he was, preparing to go on stage in front of five thousand people. His only regret was that his father and mother would not be there. He thought about Lana who was abroad with her parents. They had been going steady for nearly two years. It would be his eighteenth birthday next month. If things went well tonight, and he stayed with the group, where would he be next month? He hadn't the faintest idea.

One thing he did know: he could not entertain a career in classical music. For a long time he'd rejected, not only his father's plans for him, but the music itself.

When he'd auditioned and Dave hired him, they'd stayed up, talking. He told the musician of his classical training.

"Man, that's great," said Dave. "But that was 'then' music. We do 'now' music." This comment summed up the whole situation.

He heard Chalmers' agitated voice: "Ten minutes." The musicians began to dress in their stage suits, so skin-tight they could only be donned a few minutes before the act.

"Don't forget your dingle-dongle," said Chalmers, with a guffaw, and handed Sammy a cylindrical piece of plastic. Sammy knew what to do with it: Chalmers had explained the first day. Each of the musicians' trousers was tailored with a special pouch in the crotch for the plastic tube. On

stage it gave the impression that they were exceptionally well-equipped.

"If T.J. can do it, why can't we?" Chalmers had said.

Sammy stood up, fully attired. He had to admit he looked good. He was well-built—like my father, he thought grimly—his fair hair was groomed and shoulder-length. His father had stopped complaining about his hair a year ago. Forget about the old man, he told himself. But even as he stood admiring the cut of his suit, he heard his father's favourite phrase: Be a man, my son. Be a man.

Be a man my arse, thought Sammy defiantly, but he felt uncomfortable, as though his father had suddenly appeared.

"Here we go," said Chalmers, as excited as though he were going on stage himself.

The seven musicians took up their positions on stage. Sammy felt anticipation. His hands were sweaty and he wiped them on the seat of his pants. He held the guitar as he had been coached, at an acute angle, the plectrum in his right hand.

The playback speaker behind them crackled with the compère's voice, introducing them. A howl of excitement erupted from the audience and the curtains swung open. The group became a unit, creating a wall of electronic sound, powerful enough to beat back the squeals and cries of the thousands in the auditorium.

The sound system was utterly inadequate. With the sheer volume of noise emanating from both directions Sam had to abandon any attempt at musical subtlety. But he felt the beat of the drums and the rhythm guitar like a physical palpitation. He took the melody line and began to flourish it. He remembered he'd been told to take two paces forward whenever he had a solo. He did, and was met by piercing squeals of female voices that terrified him. But his musical sense was unruffled. He played confidently and well. He noticed that every time he manipulated the guitar it brought a response from the crowd. From his position at the front of the stage he could see the first few rows. They seemed to be mostly girls, hysterically pushing

their knuckles into their mouths, their eyes rolling, some of them squealing repetitively. He thought: How can they hear what I'm playing? They're making more noise than we are...

He finished the solo, stepped back and the first number was over. Dave took the hand-mike and Sammy heard his gravelly voice, speaking slowly and distinctively. Gradually the crowd simmered down to silence. Dave mentioned the accident and apologised for Johnny's absence. He announced that a replacement had been found, "one of your own brilliant musicians, Sammy Venables, not the First, not the Second, but the Third!" And he threw his arm in a gesture of introduction. Sammy stepped forward nodded. The audience erupted again.

Sammy the Third, thought Sammy, chuckling to himself. It was a nice touch. Dave was a good showman.

For the next forty-five minutes Sammy was transported into an atmosphere which evoked a surprising reaction from him. The hard, searing music, led by his own pyrotechnics on the guitar, had a stimulating effect which brought the audience to the brink of hysteria. In turn, the mass emotionalism communicated to the musicians.

Sammy began to move with blatant sexuality. It seemed natural... a fulfilment of the music's pulse. There was a fever in the auditorium and Sammy enjoyed every moment of it. They took their bows, leaning from the waist, like classical actors. It was a gimmick introduced by Chalmers.

Sammy felt great. As the curtains closed, Dave and the others crowded around him, punching him, congratulating him, insulting him affectionately. He'd done it. He was in.

In the dressing room Sammy wiped the make-up from his sweat-streaked face. Someone passed him a bottle of beer. He drank it gratefully. Sammy turned his head. He'd heard a strange sound. It was like a roll of drums underneath a high-pitched squealing.

"Watch out," cried Chalmers, "the silly bastards have let them through." He lunged for the dressing-room door and slammed it shut as the noise built up outside. The

door shook with the vibration of scores of hands beating against it. Sammy realised that he'd heard the sound of hundreds of girls charging up the corridor leading from the backstage entrance. He had a strange feeling in his stomach, almost fear.

Dave looked at him with a twisted grin. "I warned you, eh! Something different. Those bloody little savages would rip your guts out if they got the chance. They're so randy they don't know what they're doing."

There was a splintering crash and cries and shouts.

"What's going on there?" cried Chalmers.

A voice shouted back: "They've pushed over the mirror. No one's hurt."

Sammy remembered an old-fashioned mirror half-way along the corridor. He walked to the door, which Chalmers had now opened a fraction to talk to someone outside. Apparently the crowd were being forced back down the corridor. "Stand back, Sammy," said Chalmers. "That's all they need. One look at you and it'll be another charge of the Light Brigade. Get your make-up off and change. We'll duck through the back way in ten minutes."

"What's laid on for the party?" said the drummer, rolling his eyes.

"The usual, what else?" said Chalmers.

"I'm going to keep an eye on you," said Chalmers, once they'd settled down in the limousine. They were breathing heavily from the headlong dash to the back of the building, flanked on either side by ushers and security men to make a flying wedge through the fans desperate for any memento of the night—not particular whether it was a lock of hair or a coat sleeve.

"Thanks," said Sammy sardonically. "You think I need it, do you?"

"I'm not putting you down," said Chalmers impatiently. "But you're the new boy and it looks as though you'll be with us for a long time. I want to steer you right, see?"

"No, I don't see," said Sammy. "I played all right, didn't I?"

"I'm not talking about the music," said Chalmers with

an exaggerated show of weariness. "When you're in a group like this you've got to get used to a new life, like going to bed at dawn and getting up at 4 p.m. And other things as well."

"If you say so," said Sammy. "Where's the party?" He was still elated from the concert, and he wanted to get together with the other musicians and talk about it.

"In my suite," said Chalmers. "I reckon it's always safer to have these bashes in my place, then you boys can go back to your rooms if things get out of hand and the complaints start."

Chalmers was thoughtful for a minute. Then he turned to Sammy again: "Are you straight?"

"How d'you mean?" said Sammy.

"I mean are you bent? You know."

"Oh," said Sammy, laughing. "No, I prefer girls."

"Just wanted to be sure," said Chalmers. "I'm used to all sorts. You'd be surprised who's bent. Bloody surprised." He was silent again, until they reached the hotel.

They walked through the lobby and rode up to the top floor. It was the most palatial hotel in the city.

"George should have things ready. George is the road manager, in case you hadn't noticed," he told Sammy.

The door of the suite was half open. Chalmers pushed it wide and went in. The lights were soft and music was coming from a stereo. There were about twenty people present, some seated, others standing in groups. Most of them were girls.

George greeted them . . . a plump, sweating man whom Sammy had noticed hanging around at rehearsals. Now Chalmers introduced them.

"Is everyone here?" asked Chalmers.

"The boys haven't arrived yet," said George.

"I know. They're on the way. I mean the girls. Are they all here?"

"Just about. A few said they'd arrive after midnight. Give them time."

"Have a drink?" Chalmers asked Sammy.

"A beer, thanks."

Together they went to the bar and helped themselves.

"Thank God we're in this dump for a week," said Chalmers. "These tours wear you down, especially one-night stands. You arrive, you find the theatre, you're on, and then you're off again to another date. You can only take so much."

Sammy realised that Chalmers spoke habitually as though he were one of the musicians.

"This is the best part of it," said Chalmers, downing his beer and pouring a generous bourbon. "Booze and broads. That's what it's all about." A thought struck him and he asked Sammy, "D'you dig grass?"

"I can take it or leave it," said Sammy. He'd smoked pot once and it did nothing for him.

"And the hard stuff?" Chalmers persisted, his eyes still sharply on Sammy.

"Do I look like a head case?" said Sammy. "I don't want to destroy myself."

"Good," said Chalmers. "Have another beer."

They sat at the bar and two of the girls detached themselves from a group and came to join them.

"What's your name again?" said Chalmers. No finesse, thought Sammy with a grin.

"Edith," said the brunette, talking to Chalmers but smirking at Sammy.

"Sandra," said the blonde. "You should know it by now," she said to Chalmers. "Give me a refill," she handed him her glass.

"Sandra," explained Chalmers, "joined the show, if you know what I mean, a week ago."

"Wherever you go, I go," said Sandra. She was older than Sammy and a little plump. She wore glasses and her teeth were scummy.

"Sandra's a poor little rich girl but she's got a heart of gold. She's always ready to do favours. Any kind of favour. Aren't you, Sandra darling?" said Chalmers malevolently.

"Get lost," said Sandra equably. She put her hand on Sammy's sleeve. "What's a nice guy like you doing in a dump like this?" She let out a cackle and threw back her

head. Then she moved up close and said to him, conspiratorially: "If you want anything, just ask me. I mean it. I'm here to help anyway I can. If you want a lift anywhere, just ask me. If you need a loan, the same things goes. And I'm willing in other respects as well."

"Thanks," said Sammy. "I'll remember." He felt revulsion toward this plump toad of a female.

Other people were beginning to cluster around them and questions and comments were directed at him. "You were something else tonight. Where did you learn to play like that?" Girls stroked his cheek and laughed softly. Chalmers kept pouring him beers. Somebody turned up the volume of the stereo. The front door flew open and in burst the rest of the group, with at least two girls each. Suddenly the room was crowded. People were laughing and shouting, others were dancing. Sammy was dragged away from the bar by a big redhead with freckles. She said nothing, simply began to rub herself against him as they moved to the rhythm. She smelt stale, as though she hadn't bathed.

"Sorry," said Sammy. He pulled away from the girl and went in search of Dave and the others. He pushed his way through a crowd around an alcove. Most of them were girls and when they recognised him they giggled and touched him. Sammy thought: These are weird females. They never seem to say anything. One of the girls put her arms around his neck ."You've got what it takes," she said, and gave him such a caricature of a come-to-bed look that he laughed out loud. She looked insulted and turned her back. "Faggot," he heard her say. He saw the drummer smoking, squatting in the corner next to Dave.

He pushed through and sat down next to them on the floor and leaned his back against the wall.

"Hi," said Dave. He looked languorous and there was a half smile on his lips.

"Where ya been, man?" said the drummer. He had huge ears, which were usually mercifully covered by hair. "You want some of the joint?" He offered the remains of the cigarette, the stub wet with saliva.

"Not now, thanks," said Sammy. Experience had taught him that a flat refusal was inclined to start an argument, so he evaded the issue.

"Man, you were the greatest tonight," said the drummer. "You really gave it to them... Pow! Pow!" He made punching movements with his fists.

Dave spoke with the voice of authority: "You're okay. Don't you worry about a thing, Sammy the Third. That's how we'll bill you. Sammy the Third. Not Sammy the Turd." He giggled, high on the weed.

A girl draped herself over Dave's shoulder. "Come on, Davey, you promised. I've been waiting all night," she whined.

Dave chuckled. "Not now, baby, not now." He waved a limp hand. "I've got other things on my mind." The girl pulled a face and jerked away from him. "I'm going to bed," she said.

"Bye-bye," said Dave.

Someone changed the tape and a bongo solo burst out of the stereo. The drummer was electrified. He began to rattle with his hands on the floor, the chair, on anything close to him. He's an impressive drummer, thought Sammy, recognising the multiple rhythms he was maintaining.

Sammy was exultant. This was what it was all about. Music, and people who lived music.

Chalmers appeared. "There you are," he said. He handed Sammy a mug of beer. "If you're hungry there are sandwiches. They've just arrived. Enough to feed an army."

Sammy was hungry so he and Chalmers pushed through to the bar. People were gobbling sandwiches and half the trays were already empty. Chalmers grabbed a tray, they found a corner and ate. Sammy had been feeling heady but the food cleared his thoughts.

Two girls came and helped themselves to sandwiches. One of the girls was leaning against him and stretching for a sandwich at the same time. He felt her breast in his ribs.

She's doing this on purpose, he realised. He felt Chalmers nudge him.

"Hey! You fancy that broad do you?"

"Well," Sammy said. "I wasn't really—"

"If you fancy her, she's yours. That's Cindy. She's as game as they come."

Sammy glanced at the two girls, still holding on to him and Chalmers and consuming sandwiches. He felt embarrassed on their behalf but Chalmers seemed to have no feelings. He spoke as though they weren't there.

"Don't go away," he said to Sammy, and pulled the girl to one side. Sammy watched, fascinated. He couldn't believe that anything could be handled so brazenly. He saw Chalmers talk to the girl, his head bobbing in characteristic fashion as the words tumbled out. She turned to look at him, impassively. He saw her nod her head. Fantastic! thought Sammy. Unbelievable!

Chalmers sauntered back. "All arranged," he said. "It's a good thing to get in early, before everyone's settled for the night. You can have it off with her and then choose someone else for an all-nighter. All depends what you fancy."

Sammy felt at a loss. What was he supposed to do?

"What did you say to her?" he asked Chalmers.

"What do you think?" said Chalmers, not even looking at him.

"So what about it?" said Sammy.

"Look," said Chalmers, "she's ready, willing and able and she's gone into the end bedroom and she's waiting for you. I told you, with Cindy there's no messing about. You'd better hurry in case someone goes in there before you." He gave Sammy a shove. Sammy heard the drummer laugh, next to him. He hadn't noticed his arrival.

"Getting his initiation is he?" He also gave Sammy a push. "Go on. You can't let the poor girl down!" He and Chalmers laughed together.

Feeling foolish Sammy walked to the end bedroom. The last the thing he felt like was sex. But he didn't seem to

have any option. Maybe when he got into the bedroom he could talk to her about something else.

He hesitated outside the door, turned and looked back. At the far corner of the room Chalmers and the drummer were watching. He saw them wave and gesticulate. His face burning, he pushed the door and went in.

There were two beds in the room. Cindy was lying on one of them, reading a magazine and smoking the remains of a joint. Sammy was relieved to see that she was dressed. He pushed the door behind him.

"Turn the key," said Cindy, and dropped the magazine on the floor. Sammy felt behind him and locked the door. Cindy stood and pulled her jersey over her head. She wasn't wearing a bra. She shook her hair back into place and her breasts jiggled. She took off her short skirt and stood in front of Sammy with only her panties on. She hooked her thumbs under the elastic, the panties came off and she was naked.

Sammy still had one hand on the doorknob. He looked at the girl in amazement.

Cindy lay on the bed, her legs apart. She looked at him without expression, the same way she'd looked when Chalmers first made the proposition. She retrieved the joint and inhaled deeply, until the red tip burned her finger.

Sammy felt idiotic. I'd better get undressed, he thought. Maybe I can just turn around and walk out. But Chalmers and the drummer were out there. They'd know I couldn't have done anything already. He began to fumble with his clothes. He took off his shirt, then began to remove his shoes and socks. Cindy watched him placidly She had no physical shyness. Sammy's glance kept bouncing from her fully revealed body, only to be drawn back again.

Sammy had only his pants on now. Cindy's eyes were on his groin. She held out what was left of the joint, barely visible between her fingers. Sammy shook his head. She took a final draw and stubbed it in the ashtray. Sammy walked over to the bed and sat next to her. It seemed there

should be a logical next step but he didn't know what it was. Cindy looked at his groin again, impassive and detached.

I'll have to take my pants off, Sammy thought. He stood up and loosened his belt and the trousers fell to the floor and he stepped out of them. He had brief underpants on, bright red. He felt more and more foolish. He took off the underpants with a jerk.

Sammy felt no sexual urge. He just felt chilly in the air-conditioned bedroom.

He looked down at himself. His penis was tiny and crumpled. Why haven't I an erection? he thought, angry with himself. He willed it to stand up. Stand up and be a man, he thought. My father. His mind screamed with anger. Damn my father. Hardly a second had passed but it seemed to him an eternity, standing next to his fallen underpants, alongside a naked girl, with a drooping sexual organ.

He saw Cindy lift her hand to her mouth. What's she going to do, he thought, as though he were an outsider merely looking on. She covered her mouth and began to giggle. Her eyes were shiny from the marijuana and her voice had an edge of hysteria. She's high as a kite and she's laughing at me, he thought. He felt absurd without his clothes. Cindy was tittering and sobbing alternately, laughing and laughing. She pointed her finger at his penis, and rolled over on the bed and buried her face in the pillow to contain her mirth.

Sammy bent down and began to pull his underpants back on, then his trousers and at the same time tried to walk towards the door. His movements were confused and he stumbled and fell. He could still hear Cindy laughing at him. He finally pulled his trousers up and tried to wrench the door open. He'd forgotten, it was locked. He turned the key, opened the door and walked blindly into the great lounge. People bumped against him. His head was swimming. He kept walking. A hand grabbed his elbow. "Hey, Sammy! Sammy, what's wrong?" It was Chalmers. "You look sick boy," said Chalmers. "D'you want to go to your

room?" He looked suddenly angry. "What did that bitch Cindy do? I'll..."

Sammy broke in: "Nothing. Please, nothing.... I just want to go to bed. I think I'm going to pass out."

Chalmers showed him to a room. He kept looking with concern at Sammy's coldly withdrawn expression. "I'll kill that cow," he blurted. "She did nothing," said Sammy. "Please don't blame her. It's me. I don't feel well. I'll be all right tomorrow."

After Chalmers left, Sammy lay in bed. That was horrible, he thought. I couldn't do anything. She'll think I'm useless... Her finger pointing at him... Sammy tried to block out his thoughts. He pulled the pillow over his head but could not sleep.

The next morning, the first thought Sammy had was of the fiasco the night before. But it was a sunny day and soon his spirits rose. The girl was on pot, he thought. Too high. Forget it.

That night the theatre was packed again. Sammy played with more confidence than the first time, and was even more provocative in his movements. He was beginning to relish the emotional response from his audience.

Afterwards, there was another party. This time he made a point of sticking to Dave, talking music to him and to other members of the group. Sammy had decided that he wasn't going to fall into another trap like being pushed into a room with a crazy creature like Cindy.

About five in the morning Dave stood up. "I'm going to bed," he said. By now his eyes were red-rimmed from the marijuana. "But I want you to hear the disc I was telling you about, Sammy, I'll play you a few tracks."

They went to Dave's room. Sammy saw that both beds were occupied. Dave switched on the lights. He turned to Sammy. "They're a couple of broads I know." He put on the disc and sat on his bed, pushing the sleeping girl to one side to make room. Dave took his clothes off and slid into bed with the girl. "Make yourself comfortable," he said to Sammy, and gestured to the other bed. Fortunately there

was space for Sammy. The girl was curled up on her side of the bed.

They listened to one side of the disc. Dave pointed out passages which pleased him and commented on the solos. When the side ended he asked Sammy to turn it over.

"Hey," he said, when Sammy sat down again. "You may as well sleep here. She's okay, her name's Sheila. Hey Sheila," he shouted, "meet my buddy Sammy."

The girl mumbled under the sheet and turned over. She was a ripe blonde with full lips. She opened her eyes, yawned and looked at Sammy. "Hi," she said.

"There you are, buddy," said Dave. "Get into bed and put yourself together." He turned over and fell asleep at once. The girl next to him had not moved since he'd pushed her to one side.

Sammy felt desperation again. Sheila had turned on her side, her back to him. I suppose I should get into bed and make love to her. But I must have an erection.

What if I get into bed with her and nothing happens? He knew he couldn't run that risk again. Sammy went out of the room quickly and ran to his own room. Once inside he found a bottle of beer and gulped it down. He was shaking, as though he had narrowly escaped unspeakable danger.

Six months later the Apes of Wrath opened a season in one of the major cities. In the twenty-four weeks since Sammy had joined them, the group had enjoyed exceptional fortune. They'd had a national television show in which Sammy excelled himself and there was a ripple of press and magazine publicity which Chalmers had managed to encourage into something of a wave. Now they were booked solid for the next six months. Their L.P. released a month ago was already halfway in the top twenty.

The Apes of Wrath had the second part of the show to themselves. The crowd went wild with excitement. Pinioned in the linking spotlights, Sammy looked like a prancing pagan, his blond hair flying about his shoulders, his

guitar rising assertively, his high-pitched notes riding feverishly over the full-bodied roar of the backing.

The group's record company were to hold a party for them after the show. It would start at midnight and last until dawn. The company had booked one of the main function rooms in the hotel in which they were staying.

By now, Sammy and Chalmers had become good friends. Sammy liked the older man. Under his flinty exterior he seemed genuinely interested in the members of the group. He was cynical and unshockable, but he cared.

As they entered the hotel after the show, a few hundred girls tried to break through the cordon and reach Sammy. He stopped, waved at them, then blew them kisses. A few steps and he and Chalmers were safe in the foyer.

"One of these days you'll mistime it and those savages will eat us alive," said Chalmers. Behind them the girls were still squealing with delight.

Sammy changed into more casual clothes, then took the lift up to the top-floor bar, where Chalmers had said he'd wait. Chalmers had a beer already poured for him. He was drinking bourbon, Sammy noticed, and he had a thoughtful look. "I want to talk to you, Sammy," he said.

"Go ahead."

"You've come a long way in a short time," said Chalmers. "This is a sick business and lots of young fellows fall by the wayside. Something always gets them... Booze or broads or drugs—the hard stuff."

"What're you getting at?" asked Sammy.

"I don't miss a trick, you know that. You've turned on to pot, haven't you?"

"I smoke it now and then," said Sammy. "So what? Everyone in the group does. What about Dave? You'd think he invented it."

"I knew that." Brian Chalmers put down his drink and stubbed out his cigarette. "Look, Sammy, I'm talking to you because I like you. You're the youngest in the group, with the least experience... and the most talent. You're a musician, and you'll be a great musician all your life. I'm just trying to warn you that pot-smoking is one of those

things that starts off small but often leads into a bigger habit."

Sammy smiled with relief. Chalmers had no idea why he had taken to smoking pot. "Brian, thanks for worrying about me, but I'm not an idiot, believe me. If you think I'm one step away from the hard stuff, you can stop worrying. The last thing I'll ever do is commit hari-kiri with drugs." He gave the older man a playful punch on the shoulder. "Come on, let's go to the party."

Chalmers eyed him for a moment. "Okay. I'll buy that. And let me tell you, it's a weight off my mind."

At the party there were the usual people—agents, deejays, television personalities, reporters, starlets and hordes of girls.

Chalmers watched Sammy strolling from group to group, chatting to girls, drinking with reporters, laughing as he listened to a comedian's wisecracks. He has the poise of a much older man, thought Chalmers. But there's something bothering him.

As Sammy wandered around the party the same female face kept appearing. It was Penny, the dancer. They'd met when she joined the show. She was a member of the troupe which closed the first half. She obviously fancied Sammy and made no effort to hide it. Sammy liked her bouncy personality. She had a lot to say for herself.

The speechless females in constant attendance bored him. He'd managed to fob Penny off, so far. He thought: I've become quite expert at rebuffing girls. A stab of fear penetrated him. He drank the rest of his beer and replenished it.

Much later, he, Dave, Dave's girlfriend and Penny were together in Dave's suite. They all had suites now—a sign of financial status. Small suites, but suites.

Dave produced some pot and they squatted on the carpet and helped to clean out the pips and stalks. Then they rolled joints and lit up. The pungent smoke rose and the smell, like burning hemp, filled the room. As the marijuana reached them they began to giggle. There was a rush of conversation then the flow of words dried. They

sat somnolent, content, isolated, yet deeply in communication.

Dave and his girlfriend got into bed and disappeared under the blankets. It was difficult to say what they were doing, but they laughed a lot.

Penny looked at Sammy appealingly. It was a look which he had come to dread. In the past six months he had been with a different girl virtually every night. He had succeeded with only two of them. The figures were emblazoned in Sammy's mind like a score-card of failure. Only two successes out of nearly two hundred attempts. Desperation and frustration welled inside him. He wanted to make love to Penny. He liked her and he knew she liked him. He could have gone to bed with her before but he'd used the marijuana as an excuse. "I'm too high," he'd said, and giggled. Everyone knew about pot. Quite often you just couldn't be bothered. That was why he'd taken to smoking it. He'd noticed that Dave had a take-it or leave-it attitude to sex, because of the pot. It offered Sammy the escape he so desperately needed. On the two occasions when he had succeeded in making love, he'd been drinking *and* smoking pot—a dangerous combination. He'd passed out in bed and regained consciousness to find himself confronted with a fait accompli—he had made love without even knowing about it.

But that was sex without pleasure. Afterwards he'd felt nothing except a satisfaction that he'd done his duty. But it had been a long time, now, since even those partial successes.

Penny took his hand. "Let's go to your place," she said. There was no mistaking the expression in her eyes.

Fear and anxiety surged within him. "All right," he said. He couldn't very well say, I don't want to. Anyway, you never could tell, maybe it would be all right once he had Penny in the privacy of his suite.

They were both quiet as they rode in the lift from Dave's floor. In his suite he put on some music and poured himself a drink. The marijuana-inspired awareness was still with him, and he found himself staring at a pattern on

the wall. He knew that he musn't drink any more. Pot and liquor were not an agreeable mixture.

"Shall I order some coffee?" asked Penny.

"Not for me," said Sammy.

"Then I won't bother," she said. She came to him and kissed him. "Aren't you sleepy, yet?" she asked. "You know what time it is!"

Sammy said nothing. It wouldn't be long before he would have to confront that situation again. The male-female situation which terrified him. He drank deeply, trying to pour the liquid straight into his gullet, as though the foaming beer could wash away his terror. He saw Penny looking at him with alarm.

"Sammy, please come to bed. You look so miserable! You shouldn't drink any more."

"Is that right," he said, and poured more beer into his mug. He was unsteady on his feet, but his mind was clear. He watched Penny nervously, wondering what she would do next. She looked indecisive, then stood up, as though she had finally reached a conclusion.

"If you want to stay up and drink yourself silly, that's your business," she said. "I'm going to get into bed." She gave an arch look and began to undress. She put her things in a soft pile on a chair and jumped into bed. Penny lay under the covers and stared at him, her blue eyes a trifle bloodshot from the marijuana.

"What are you staring at?" said Sammy, his speech thickened by the drink.

"For Pete's sake, Sammy," said Penny, and rolled over in bed. He heard her voice, slightly muffled: "Come to bed. You'll feel much better afterwards."

The conflict between the liquor and the marijuana was beginning to affect Sammy's perception and he heard the elevator machinery whirring like a giant insect. In the bathroom a tap dripping had a distinct rhythmic pattern, not one drop falling with the same noise as another.

Sam stood in front of the mirror and began to take off his clothes. They fell to the carpet like dead birds. I'm getting too high, he warned himself. He picked up the

beer and drank it deliberately, gulp after gulp, until it was gone. He took off his pants and his underpants. He looked at himself from head to toe. He still had his socks on. Well, he wouldn't bother about them.

His penis hung, lifeless, helpless, useless.

"For God's sake!" Sammy screamed and punched his reflection. The glass splintered in a spider's web, and his knuckles gushed blood that formed sticky globules on the mirror. He punched the mirror again and again, the frustration within him so great that it threatened to destroy him. He was crying, and the tears blurred his vision.

Penny leaped out of bed and screamed at the sight of the blood. Sammy didn't even see her. She put on her clothes and ran out of the suite.

Penny thought: Sammy's flipped! He's gone around the bend! Her first impulse was to run away but now she was in the safety of the hotel corridor she felt compassion. She couldn't leave him, he might bleed to death. She decided to call Brian Chalmers. He seemed to be Sammy's best friend. She knocked on Chalmers' suite. He was still awake. When she told him what had happened his face tightened with alarm and he ran down the stairs to Sammy's suite. Penny took a taxi back to her digs. Musicians are all crazy, she reflected. One should never take them too seriously.

CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS

Sammy Venables is far from unique in the world of pop music. Impotence is widespread among pop stars, for reasons which need elaboration. Sammy's dilemma, however, was two-pronged.

He was the son of an arrogantly self-righteous, overbearing man who took no real interest in Sam's development as a person, but imposed upon him rigid standards of rectitude. He constantly harped upon the need for his son to 'be a man', without being in any way specific about the qualities that made 'a man'. Inevitably, young Sammy equated 'being a man' with sexual prowess.

Because of the over-emphasis placed on classical music in the Venables's home, Sammy counter-reacted and developed a distaste for this form of music. His innate musicianship had to find expression, however, and his father's blind antipathy to the counter-culture of long hair, relaxed life-styles and pop music virtually forced Sammy into that area of musical expression.

Coming from a wealthy home, where specific standards of decency and social conduct were ingrained in him, Sammy was initially like a ship without a rudder in the 'anything goes' atmosphere of pop music and show business.

Until then he had been a perfectly normal young man. He had pursued girls, wooed them and won them. He played his traditional part in the courtship, and the girls played theirs. The possibility of an inability to perform the sexual act did not even enter his mind.

Once he became a pop musician, however, he was thrown into a milieu in which the sexual norm did not exist. Pop stars have become the sex symbols of our era. The sexual symbolism implicit in young men brandishing guitars is exploited and emphasised. Young girls quite naturally regard these heroes as sexual supermen—the definitive rampant male. But the youngsters involved in this atmosphere of crass sexual licence—the girls in the audience and the boys on the stage—are still very young and woefully inexperienced.

As often as not, the musicians cannot cope. Previously, *they* would be the predators, seeking and pursuing females, and going through the motions of seducing them. Now, *the girls* are the predators. Girls everywhere, underfoot, offering themselves. As they are offering themselves to a sex symbol, they wish to be ravished. They wish to submit passively to all-powerful masculinity. These inexperienced females have no idea that sex is essentially a joint undertaking.

Sammy, thrust by circumstances into an encounter with a typical pop scene hanger-on, was bewildered and confused by the cold-blooded atmosphere of blatant sex. The

girl simply took her clothes off and lay on the bed, waiting to be taken. There was no give and take, no tenderness or affection which Sammy normally—and quite rightly—associated with the act of making love.

He reacted in the same way as any other sensitive young men would . . . he failed to become sexually aroused by a girl who did not show any awareness for his emotional personality and did not offer her help in the sexual act.

Sammy's mental process was complicated further at this point by his father's insistence on his 'being a man'. When Sammy's masculinity, his penis, failed to perform as expected, and the girl laughed at his failure, Sammy believed himself to be inadequate—incapable of fulfilling the requirements of his father. He suffered personal humiliation when he was mocked by the girl. This traumatic experience created a pattern of anxiety which made it virtually impossible for Sammy to function normally with any female.

Living in the pop music world, however, he was constantly being entreated by young women to take them sexually. Eager bed-partners surrounded him every night—and every night the faces were different.

Everyone around him contributed to the charade. As far as he was aware, they were all thoroughly promiscuous, and quite happily so. Sammy had no way of knowing that *he* was quite normal. He believed that he was failing to measure up to the normal social standards of his chosen milieu.

Then, in his desperate efforts to adjust, Sammy followed the example of many others in the world of pop music. He took to drugs—in his case, a mild hallucinogenic, marijuana. Fortunately he did not become involved with the much more dangerous and addictive hard drugs such as heroin and cocaine.

Marijuana helped to tranquillise him and make him acceptable to the others. He was no longer an outsider, but an insider. And, his use of marijuana gave him the justification he so desperately needed for not participating in sexual activity.

Alcohol, marijuana and other drugs are used excessively by a great number of musicians more often than not to anaesthetise them against the relentless demands of reality. The drugs induce a mild euphoria and reality retreats . . . for a while.

In Sammy's case, the pressure became too great. In public, he was the typical sex symbol and women badgered him. But in the bedroom, there was no applause—only the snicker of a girl.

Brian Chalmers brought Sammy to me. Sammy was relieved when I told him that impotence was virtually endemic to his area of work, and that many pop stars before him had consulted me with the same problem. I explained that it was virtually impossible to effect a 'cure' with a man in his situation, constantly on the move and meeting new girls every night.

I pointed out that with a married couple it was possible to counsel both partners. Usually the wife loved her husband and could be made to understand that she should take a much more active part in the sexual relationship. Once the sexual act became a joint effort, the psychic tension which was the cause of the husband's impotence was eliminated. He could then perform normally.

But how can a youth enmeshed in a promiscuous way of life hope to find this kind of understanding female partner?

In the case of Sammy, however, his childhood girlfriend, Lana, came to the rescue. After another year of touring the country, Sammy formed his own group and concentrated on recording. He resumed his relationship with Lana. It was a stable, continuing relationship with a background of affection and understanding and Sammy's impotence disappeared.

Many artists in the pop music field are less fortunate. They are thrown into deep water at a tender age and *never* learn to swim. Their sexual perspective becomes distorted, sometimes permanently so.

Conclusion: So What Does It All Mean?

We have looked into the lives of a number of people and have seen how, in each case, parental influence brought them to a point of crisis, sometimes temporary, occasionally enduring.

What have we learned from this?

An analysis of the eighteen case histories presented, show that although they seem remarkably different, covering a wide range of human experience, there are in fact only a few basic problems involved. And there are not really so many differing types of parent, or child.

There are three basic situations possible—both parents unsatisfactory, or the father faulty, or the mother faulty. Remember, to a child a dead parent is 'faulty'. There is also, of course, the situation when both parents are *satisfactory* but this does not create problems.

Is it possible for *anyone* to read this book without finding some of their own problems, either with parents or children, reflected in these pages? I don't think so.

My Heart Belongs to Daddy, *Erris*, *Girl in Another Town*, *Look What I'm Doing*, *Thirty-Year Itch*—all are stories of a mother bringing up a child without a father present. *Clowns Can Get Headaches Too*! falls into this category, because Frankie Bayliss's mother, Agatha, was so domineering that the father became insignificant. A similar situation arose in *The Baby Man* after the death of the father. The mother was the dominant influence.

Where did the mothers go wrong? And, in each case, what could the parents have done to avoid tragedy?

My Heart Belongs to Daddy: (Promiscuity).

The main mistake made by Beatrice, Carol's mother, was that she tried to re-live her own life through her

daughter. She forced on her daughter the success which she herself had never achieved.

She also tried to act the part of a father, by bulldozing a path through life for Carol.

If Beatrice had been content with being a loving mother, and had refrained from assuming a fatherly role, she would have stood a much better chance of creating a normal, balanced life for her child.

Erris: (Homosexuality).

At first glance it would seem that Diana Taylor, Erris's mother, was faultless. But if we look deeper we see that by shutting her son away from masculine influences, by codling him and generally overprotecting him, she indoctrinated him with feminine values.

Her naïveté in not observing the effeminacy of André amounted to a condonation of her son's first experience of homosexuality.

If, in Erris's early years, Diana had been less protective and allowed him to be a normal, dirt-loving boy with rough manners, there is very little likelihood that he would have become homosexual.

Look What I'm Doing: (Nymphomania and Voyeurism).

Errol Hughes's mother abandoned him when he was four. This created in him the feeling that if he was not good enough for his own mother to love, then he could hardly expect love from anyone else. That was the starting point of his sexual insecurity.

The girl he eventually married, Annie Loft, had a mother who was lax and exerted very little control. Because her interest lay elsewhere, she did not notice the relationship developing between her young daughter and the musician. Strong action by the mother could have saved the situation, but Susan Loft compounded her mistake by leaving them alone together in the house for a weekend. She virtually condoned the relationship. If she had been *present* as a mother, without trying to be a father,

she could have saved her daughter from a life of compulsive promiscuity.

Girl in Another Town: (Frigidity and Impotence).

Alice's frigidity, which in turn caused her husband, John, to believe that he was impotent, was traceable to her mother. The mother's fanatical indoctrination of Alice, forced her daughter to believe that sex was obscene—a necessary evil for the purpose of procreation. If the mother had allowed her daughter to draw her *own* conclusions, then none of the complex problems, affecting several lives, would have arisen.

Clowns Can Get Headaches Too! (Migraine and Alcoholism).

Agatha Bayliss refused to allow her child to develop in his own way. She forced her opinions upon him and in doing so created a destructive pattern similar to that created by Beatrice in *My Heart Belongs to Daddy*.

The Baby Man: (Extravagance and Immaturity).

Here we have an over-indulgent mother and an excessively stern father. When the father died, the mother's influence became dominant with the result that her son was still a 'mummy's boy' as an adult.

You Can Say That Again: (Stammering).

If Howard Meade's parents had not worried about his speech and had left him to learn to talk in the normal way, Howard would never have become a stammerer.

The Sun Worshipper: (Phobia).

If Mary Williams's parents had not forced their religious beliefs upon their daughter, her phobia would never have arisen.

Not Such a Model Girl: (Nymphomania and Lack of Confidence).

If Cathy Wilson's parents had not robbed her of independence and initiative, and had not insisted on doing everything *for* her, she would not have become such an inadequate person.

The Astonishing Tale of How Tommy's Twitch was Cured by Sloan's Liniment: (Nervous Twitching).

If Tommy's father had not, through insensitivity, forced his son to kiss his Grandpa's corpse, the twitch which disrupted his entire life would never have started.

The Non-Con-Man: (Lack of Confidence).

If Basil Cane's father had not tried to *create* the child he wanted, and had allowed his son to develop in his own way, then Basil would have built his own confidence.

Who's Been Sleeping in My Bed?: (Bed-wetting).

If the bed-wetting had been ignored, it would never have become a problem.

What About Sammy IV?: (Impotence).

If Samuel Venables II had let his son enjoy his own type of music (pop), and hadn't harped on masculinity, Sammy the Third would not have experienced such misery in his sex life.

Scrooge Without Christmas: (Asthma and Miserliness).

If Adrian's parents had given him love and affection, and had not made him into an outsider within his own home, then he and his future family would have been spared unhappiness and disaster.

Double or Nothing: (Compulsive Gambling).

If Ronald had been given love by his father, he would not have become a compulsive gambler.

Here is the News: (Aversion).

If Guy James's father had prevented his son from seeing

his false teeth every morning, then Guy would not have developed his aversion to dentures.

The Thirty-Year Itch: (Psoriasis).

If a well-intentioned remark by Susan Norton's father had not been distorted by her to induce a sense of guilt, she would never have suffered from psoriasis.

The eighteen case histories show that there are very few basic family problems, and even they overlap with one another.

Even though some neuroses seem radically different—such as nervous twitching, blushing, stammering and even bed-wetting—they are essentially similar problems. They fall under the same category because they have the same trigger mechanism. They are all started by the thought: I hope I won't stammer or blush or twitch or wet the bed. The thought is always father to the deed.

The same psychological circumstances which create a compulsive gambler can also create an alcoholic or a drug addict or an extravagant immature adult.

The guilt which produces psoriasis can cause insomnia.

The tensions which create asthma can bring on migraine.

We may conclude from the case histories in this book, that if the father is absent and the mother tries to assume his role as well as her own, trouble will ensue. Even if the mother makes no mistakes, trouble is still possible (as in *The Thirty-Year Itch*) but this is unusual.

All the other problems in these case histories arise from two parents either depriving their children of love and attention, or trying to force their wishes and prejudices on their children.

Surprisingly, thousands of case histories have led me to the conclusion that the death of a mother does not create the severe problems caused by a father's death.

However, the development of autistic children (children

who are unable to relate disparate activities) is definitely linked to the absence of the mother during the first year of their lives. This disability has not been touched upon in this book.

After analysing these case histories we arrive at these conclusions:

If yours is a normal family, with both parents present, give your child as much independence as possible as soon as you can. Don't force *your* opinions and beliefs on the child.

Give the child love and attention, because that is all the child requires. He has no need for material things.

If you are aware that errors have already arisen and are marring your relationship with your child, you should say: I'm sorry. I've made mistakes in your upbringing and *I* have created *your* problems. Try to understand *my* problems and *my* ignorance and realise that I did not have the necessary knowledge—although I acted with the best of intentions. If *you* can understand my mistakes as a parent, then *you* can cure any damage which I have inadvertently caused.

If people with close relationships communicated their problems to one another, solutions would always be possible. Without such communication there can be no solution.

If you are a mother bringing up a child on your own, be a loving mother only. Don't try to be a father as well—or you will fail to be either.

The same applies to fathers—Don't try to play the part of mother.

If you are a child who has a problem caused by your parents, try to understand how the problem originated. Try and see yourself from your parents' point of view.

Remember that you cannot solve your own hidden problems, because you cannot help deceiving yourself and covering up the genuine cause.

Finally, never be afraid to seek psychiatric advice.

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